



THE INDEPENDENT

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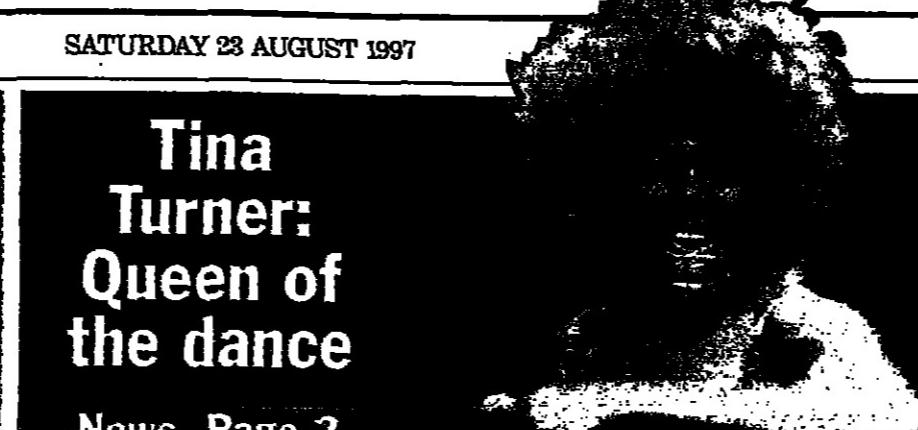
SATURDAY 23 AUGUST 1997

(P65p) 60p

Magnus Magnusson:
The pass master
thelongweekend



Tina Turner:
Queen of the dance
News Page 2



Holiday Fun:
1,000 tickets to
the zoo
the eye

WEATHER: Warm and sunny

England bungle their daring daylight robbery

From our Wrong Correspondent

Jason Bennetto
(Crime correspondent)
reports from the Sixth Test at The Oval

When not writing about Thai prostitutes, heroin junkies and bent coppers, I've always fancied reporting on a game that takes five days and involves 22 men taking turns to wield a large piece of wood.

But within hours of entering the ground for the second day of the final Test with Australia, I began to have my suspicions that all was not what it seemed.

How could our international cricket team bat so badly in their first innings, stage an exciting fightback, and then collapse again?

Forensic and photographic evidence, expert statements from newspaper commentators, and eye-witnesses from cricket grounds around the country, suggest the answer is that England are hopeless. But I believe the answer is more complicated. Perhaps the match is rigged and England have deliberately thrown the Ashes series.

I immediately telephoned Scotland Yard where a spokesman would only say that he was "not aware" of any current investigation into corruption of bribe-taking - clear proof that a major inquiry is under way.

Underworld contacts later confirmed that England's performances during the summer have been criminal.

Questions to the England management as to whether they expected their men to be charged with impersonating an international cricket team went unanswered.

The crowd would not have looked out of place at a church fete. A mixture of the frightfully nice, frightfully well-dressed and just plain frightful, they seemed happy to applaud England's latest attempt to avoid further humiliation.

While patrolling the perimeter of the ground I found evidence of further misdemeanours. Why, on a hot August day, at one of the most prestigious matches of the year, were spectators offered fish and chips and huge sausages from a selection of fast-food vans?

Such fare is not available in the numerous executive boxes. Sadly, many of the corporate guests did not appear to be interested in what was happening on the pitch. More than an hour after play resumed following lunch, most of the corporate boxes were empty.

A trawl around the bars revealed dozens of men watching the cricket on the television. As one elderly gentleman explained: "You can see everything much more clearly on the TV and there is someone to tell you what's happening."

On the pitch, England were performing one of their familiar double bluffs - teasing the crowd with the possibility of a comeback, as Phil Tufnell spun the team back into contention.

But as the day came towards an end, it looked as if England were once again heading for



Something to laugh about: Mike Atherton, the England captain, and his team watch a video replay of Alec Stewart's catch to dismiss Ian Healy of Australia, caught between his knees. Photograph: Laurence Griffiths/Alsport

Labour hushes up new scandal

Christian Wolmar
Westminster Correspondent

Labour party managers have delayed publishing the results of an inquiry into a second party scandal in Scotland to avoid further embarrassment in the run-up to next month's devolution vote.

A report into allegations of widespread misbehaviour by Labour councillors in Glasgow is thought to recommend the suspension and possible expulsion from the Labour group of up to half a dozen members and censuring around 20 more. One Labour source said: "When this comes out, if the Labour party investigators have done their job right, it will make

events in Paisley pale into insignificance."

The report has been prepared by a sub-committee of Labour's ruling national executive, and its findings are expected to be damning.

The investigation was launched in June and originally centred around suggestions that councillors were allocated trips on delegations and places on council dinners on the basis of their loyalty when voting in debates in Labour group meetings. Two main factions in Glasgow council centre around the leader, Bob Gould, and his deputy Gordon McDermott.

However, the remit has been extended to cover the political in-fighting in the council, which

has paralysed the leadership, and suggestions that councillors have assaulted members of staff.

One of those who was interviewed by the investigators said: "They were interested in the general conduct of the group and how members behaved."

The Independent has learned that the report, which has been completed, criticises the behaviour of up to a quarter of Labour's 75 councillors in the city and recommends the expulsion of between four and six. Many councillors may face charges under Labour's catch-all offence of bringing the party into disrepute.

Although interviews with 50 councillors were completed ear-

ly last month, Labour did not want its findings to emerge until after the 11 September devolution referendum and it is now expected to be presented for approval by the meeting of Labour's ruling National Executive Committee next month.

Labour's image in Scotland has been tarnished by the suspension of two of its MPs in separate investigations, Mohammed Sarwar (Glasgow Govan) and Tommy Graham (Renfrewshire West).

The Tories have capitalised on allegations of Labour "sleaze" and have used pictures of the men on a Tory poster opposing devolution. If full details of the report on Glasgow leaked out, party managers fear the im-

pact on the devolution debate could be catastrophic.

A majority of Glasgow's Labour councillors are full time and many of the complaints centre around the allocation of key committee posts, worth salaries of up to £20,000 for a chairmanship and £12,000 for a deputy chairmanship.

Gordon Archer, who recently defected to the Scottish National Party from Labour said:

"These posts are not allocated on the basis of ability, but on the basis of loyalty. If you tow the line, you get a good job, which is pretty rich given that these people are unemployable elsewhere."

There has also been criticism of the use of the Common

Good Fund, a £1m fund obtained from the sale of Glasgow's gasworks in the 1920s and whose proceeds are at the disposal of the Provost (the equivalent of the mayor).

At least £2,000 was allocated to pay for a fleet of limousines to take 20 leading councillors and their spouses to the Edinburgh Tattoo last year and there are also suggestions that money from the fund has been used to pay for councillors' expenses on delegations after their application to go on the trips has been turned down by the relevant committee.

The investigation considered allegations that these councillors were being rewarded for their loyalty. They also heard

Saturday Story, page 14

Millennium Dome may have to move

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

The millennium dome may have to be moved from its Greenwich home in 2001 because of a split between the two organisations in charge of the project.

The New Millennium Experience Company, NMEC, which is running the year-long exhibition, wants its building to stay on the site as a possible Olympic stadium or as a theme park. The company is talking to both the Sports Council and the Tussauds Group about plans to extend the dome.

But sources at English Partnerships, which owns the land, say it would prefer to see the dome moved so that other leisure facilities and parks could be put there for community use.

It plans to use the exhibition car park for houses as part of a new London "urban quarter".

The difference of opinion was revealed after the minister without portfolio, Peter Mandelson, said it was keen to see the dome stay where it was.

"We would love to see it staying on the site and for another operator to come in and take it over and use it to its full potential. It's going to be an internationally famous building and it's go-

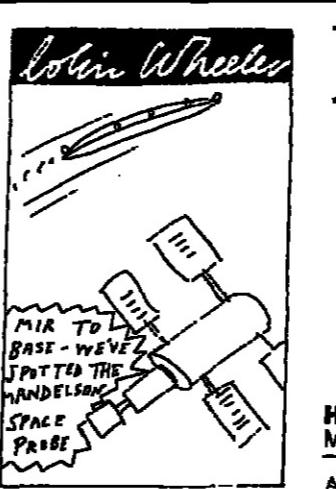
ing to be a landmark," he said.

A spokeswoman for Pearson, which owns the company that runs Madame Tussauds, said it had been approached with a view to putting a theme park on the site. She could not say precisely who had made the contact. "They have been in touch with us saying, 'Please, please are you interested?' The truth is maybe, yes. It is obviously an interesting option," she said.

A spokesman for the Sports Council said its plan could include facilities for local use, but would also provide a major stadium for international competitions.

"We have already talked with Greenwich along these lines, and we are very excited to see that this idea of a long-term option is catching on. We are very keen for a sporting option to be considered," he said.

Gez Sagar, spokesman for NMEC, said it was keen to see the dome stay where it was. "We would love to see it staying on the site and for another operator to come in and take it over and use it to its full potential. It's going to be an internation-



Mir to control:
our problem
is fixed...

Helen Womack
Moscow

After a last-minute panic over two leaks, Russian cosmonaut Pavel Vinogradov, backed by his commander Anatoly Solov'yov, finally floated into the vacuum of Mir's Spektr module yesterday to restore power to the station which had been impaired since a collision with a cargo craft in June. The success of the high-risk operation changed the run of bad luck on the 11-year-old complex and went a good way to restoring confidence in Russia's cash-strapped space programme.

Michael Foale, the British-born astronaut who took a back seat while his Russian colleagues carried out the space repairs, said yesterday had been a "super day" which showed that Mir, for all its technical faults, was "fixable".

The media had been led to expect that Commander Anatoly Solov'yov, one of Russia's most experienced cosmonauts, would make the dangerous "internal space walk" into the airless Spektr module, where the least little piece of drifting debris could bring death if it punctured a space suit. But he allowed his

junior to become the hero, providing back-up at the hatch while Vinogradov went into the dark hole of Spektr feet-first.

Despite the very real hazards, the cosmonauts kept the mood light by joking with each other and officials at Mission Control.

"There are some white crystals flying around like soap," Vinogradov reported as he fumbled about in the cramped capsule, illuminated by torch light.

"I think it's my shampoo," the voice of Foale came over the radio. The guest astronaut, whose sleeping quarters had been in Spektr, was sitting for safety in the Soyuz rocket which all three crewmen would have used in an emergency to evacuate Mir.

It was no laughing matter earlier in the day when two leaks were found, one in the docking chamber just outside the module and one in the left-hand glove of Vinogradov's suit.

Once inside Spektr, Vinogradov began reconnection 11 cables which had to be unplugged after the June collision.

This full power returned to Mir, which gets its energy from solar panels covering the exterior, including the outside surface of Spektr.

Walk on the wild side, page 12



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news

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Vegetarian CJD victim raises fears of 'time bomb'

The latest victim of the fatal "new variant" Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (v-CJD) probably caught it from food infected with mad cow disease at a time when the disease was "underground" in the food supply, and 10 times less widespread than in the late Eighties. On that basis, there could be a rapid growth over the next 5-10 years in the number of v-CJD cases, with numbers rising steeply in proportion to that of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) – which grew from the first case in 1985 to a peak of 36,681 in 1992.

Roger Tomkins, whose daughter Clare, 24, is in the final stages of the incurable brain disorder, added that Britain could be "sitting on a time bomb" of v-CJD caused by eating meals infected with BSE. Ms Tomkins has been a strict vegetarian since 1985 – when the first case of BSE was identified on a farm about 25 miles from her home in Iltonbridge, Kent. Her case indicates that v-CJD can have an incubation period of at least 11 years.

Professor Roy Anderson of the zoology department at the University of Oxford has studied the BSE epidemic, in which 161,000 cases have been confirmed in Britain since 1985. He calculates that 446,000 infected animals were used in the food supply to the end of 1989, when the most infectious parts of the animals – the brains and spinal cords – were banned, and another 283,000 between 1989 and 1996.

Mrs Tomkins is the 25th known v-CJD victim in Britain. In 1995 there were three deaths, in 1996 ten, and 1997 looks set to double last year's figure. If all the cases so far originate from before 1985, the next few years could see a rapid jump.

Charles Arthur

'Big Issue' wins lottery cash

The Arts Council yesterday made the first cash allocations under its £19m Arts for Everyone scheme, and left sellers of the *Big Issue* magazine for the homeless £125,000 better off with a grant for the *Big Issue* Video Training Unit to teach them film- and video making.

This was the first of four awards under the lottery-funded scheme to be made over the next two years. Acting Arts Council secretary-general, Graham Devlin, said the first phase of the scheme could not be geographically fair because applicants were chosen strictly on merit. Nottingham and Suffolk did particularly well with several major grants: Suffolk Dance won £390,000, Wingfield Arts, of mid-Suffolk, received £199,000, Nottinghamshire County Council got £399,000, and Nottingham Playhouse £500,000.

Critical pupil returns to school

A schoolgirl who was expelled for criticising her teachers but then reinstated, said yesterday she had been given an assurance that she would not be victimised. Sarah Briggs, 15 (left), was told she could return to Queen Elizabeth's Girls School at Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, when the new term starts next month. The decision was taken at a meeting of school governors, senior teachers and the family solicitor on Thursday.

Sarah was thrown out last month halfway through her GCSE course after writing to a local newspaper claiming that pupils' work was affected by teachers' absenteeism. Headteacher Nicola Atkin demanded a written apology, but Sarah refused. She wrote a letter to Ms Atkin outlining her complaints and was expelled.

Trevor Phillips, page 15

Tube workers to ballot over strike

A London Underground strike came a step closer yesterday when the Rail, Maritime and Transport workers' union announced that it was to ballot its 5,000 station staff members on industrial action. The move by the union's national executive follows a decision by LU management to impose a 2.7 per cent pay offer which has already been rejected by RMT staff in a referendum.

Husband charged with murder

The husband of missing Sandie Bowen appeared in court yesterday charged with her murder. Forestry worker Mike Bowen, 45, was arrested and questioned for three days by detectives investigating the disappearance of Mrs Bowen. He was charged with her murder on Thursday night and remanded in custody for a week when he appeared before magistrates at Newport, Gwent. His son, Victor, 19, was also arrested but was released without charge.

Mrs Bowen, 53, a catering worker of Llangoed, Gwent, disappeared more than two weeks ago and police launched a major hunt for her. Her husband made an appeal for her to get in touch.

GCSE celebration turns to tragedy

A 16-year-old schoolboy was electrocuted while trying to cross railway line after celebrating his exam results. The youth, who has not been named, was with a friend when he tried to cross the tracks at Sidcup station in south London on Thursday night. He slipped, landed on a live rail and died instantly. British Transport Police said yesterday. It is believed the youth, of Dartford, Kent, gained nine GCSEs. An inquest will be held.

Conscience gets better of thief

A thief with a guilty conscience has handed back computer disks loaded with the vital work of a leading cancer research scientist.

The five disks were left in a private mail box outside a house in Lympstone, Hampshire, and were then handed into police. The disks belong to Professor David Newell, 42, and contain vital research into new drugs for treating cancer patients. The professor, who was holidaying at Wimborne, Dorset when the disks were stolen from his car, leads a 20-strong group of scientists at the North of England Cancer Research Campaign based at Newcastle University.

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SIMPLY THE BEST: Fiftysomething grandmother Tina Turner gets more Britons hopping than the Spice Girls, according to a new survey. Asked to name the time that they just had to get up and dance to, more chose Tina Turner's 'The Best' than the girl group's 'Wannabe'. The 'Guinness Book of British Hit Singles' survey of 1,200 people aged between 18 and 55 found that 'The Prodigy's 'Firestarter' beat 'Wannabe' into third place on the list of top ten dance-floor favourites. Fourth came the Gloria Gaynor classic 'I Will Survive', followed by Abba's 'Dancing Queen'. In the chart of top ten summer songs, Cliff Richard took third place with 'Summer Holiday', behind 'Summertime' by Fresh Prince & DJ Jazzy Jeff and 'In the Summertime' by Shaggy. Number one love song was Whitney Houston's 'I Will Always Love You' while 'Orinoco Flow' by Enya was named as the best song to wind down to.

Flagship drama set to sail as Hollick saves Hornblower

Horatio Hornblower is set to sail the high seas again after the most ambitious drama project in the history of TV has been saved by the intervention of Lord Hollick's United News & Media.

The £10m adaptation of the Hornblower books by CS Forrester has been running into problems because of delays in building a replica 18th century frigate that will be the star of the Napoleonic adventure stories.

Filming had been due to start in the Black Sea last month but problems with the replica *Indefatigable* which is being built in Turkey caused United News & Media to step in.

"The boat was taking forever to build and there were fears that the whole thing would end up massively over budget," a source on the production has been reported as saying.

So far the only major role to be cast is that of Hornblower himself. For the part played by Gregory Peck in the 1951 Hollywood version, ITV has picked unknown actor Iain Griffudd. Actresses Kate Beckinsale and Samantha Morton have been linked with the part of Hornblower's French mistress.

In addition to the major characters United is hiring 150 extras from the Ukraine for the drama's large battle scenes.

"We always knew this was going to be a mammoth task," said Vernon Lawrence, head of United Film and TV. "But remember this is the third attempt to make Hornblower – Thames tried to do it before and so did the BBC. It is just taking a little longer than expected."

Filming will now start on 14 September but only two of the planned films can be made this year before winter sets in and the production and the crew. The 24-gun frigate has had to be made to modern safety standards while looking as authentic as possible.

Mr Lawrence said: "It was a hugely complicated job which meant it just fell behind schedule."

The vessel is the idea of Surrey boat-builder Michael Turk and is the first hand-built wooden frigate to be built for 150 years. He used the Maritime Museum in Greenwich, south-east London to research its design.

The plan is that if the first four Hornblower films are a ratings success the boat can be used for a long-running series, thereby amortising the building costs over time. It will also be made available to tourist charter to help pay its way and is reportedly destined to be part of Greenwich's Millennium celebrations.

Paul McCann

Actor hurt in 'road-rage' fracas

The actor star Martin Shaw is considering taking legal action against a bus driver whom he claims assaulted him in a road-rage style attack.

Shaw, 51, who played Doyle in *The Professionals*, claims he was almost killed when the driver launched an unprovoked attack on him. He has a three-inch gash under his chin and was seeing an oculist yesterday for treatment for bruised ribs.

Shaw was cycling to a matinee performance of Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband* at the Haymarket Theatre in London's West End when he became involved in a feud with the driver of the number 52 bus near Hyde Park Corner.

"The bus seemed to come straight at me then the driver threw his lunch box at me through the window. I have no idea what sparked it off. He leapt out of his

**Jail threat lifted from eco-warrior**

A environmental protester dubbed "Captain Greenpeace" escaped being jailed yesterday after the oil giant BP withdrew legal action against him.

Jon Castle was one of a group of Greenpeace activists involved in the controversial occupation of a drilling rig to publicise the environmental impact of oil exploration off the Scottish coast.

Yesterday he was ordered to appear at the Court of Session in Edinburgh after BP alleged his involvement had breached an earlier court order banning him from taking such action.

The court was told that BP no longer wanted to pursue the action following its decision to abandon a £1.4m claim for damages against Greenpeace.

Richard Keen QC, for BP, the parent company of Britoil plc, said: "In light of the claim for damages that has been withdrawn, it is not the intention of Britoil to insist on this complaint."

Swim star turns tables in homecoming row

Irish swimmer Michelle de Bruin last night turned the tables on the Dublin government in a row over plans to stage no official welcome for her return from the European Championships in Spain.

After stressing that she did not see the move as a snub, De Bruin – who has already won three medals at the European event to

add to the four she collected at last year's Olympic Games – invited Sports Minister Dr Jim McDaid to a reception of her own, which will be held near Dublin Airport on Monday.

Earlier Dr McDaid said he did not want to organise a ministerial airport welcome as he believed the spotlight should focus exclusively on the multi medal-winner. Distancing his decision from drug-linked controversy that has dogged De Bruin's success, Dr McDaid said he would be "delighted" to attend the reception. "I was merely making the point that airport homecomings were not the place for politicians."

briefing

MONEY

Principles before profit as investors get ethical

The ethical investment sector is booming, despite being written off as a hippy-type fad just a few years ago.

New figures indicate that growing numbers of people are becoming more choosy about where their money is invested and do not want supporting activities they oppose such as animal testing or weapons production.

The amount of money invested in ethical unit trusts and investment trusts has more than doubled in the last three years, according to the figures from the Ethical Investment Research Service (EIRIS). In comparison, total funds managed by all UK unit and investment trusts have grown by only 35 per cent.

Ethical investment is defined as choosing investments according to your values and beliefs. Many ethical investors steer clear of companies which, for example, are involved in pesticides, animal testing or nuclear power.

EIRIS says many people with pension plans or endowment mortgages may be indirectly supporting an activity they are opposed to.

The first ethical fund was set up in 1984 and there are now more than 40. Many of them actively seek out environmentally-friendly companies. In June this year the total amount managed by ethical funds was £1.465bn compared with £672m in July 1994.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Shops flouting cigarettes ban

Attempts to catch out tobacconists who sell cigarettes to children by sending youngsters into shops to attempt to make a purchase may be a waste of time, research suggested yesterday.

Surveys of two schools in Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, revealed that large numbers of children under the legal age limit of 16 were buying cigarettes from local shops, with only a small percentage being turned away. But test sales carried out by the local trading standards office – in which a child is recruited to try to buy cigarettes – gave no indication of a problem. Not a single test purchase was made and hence there were no prosecutions.

The surveys, led by paediatrician Dr Mark Bagot from Newcastle University, were conducted at two schools in May 1995 and May 1996. At the first school 39 per cent of girls aged 14 to 15 and 26 per cent of boys were regular smokers. At the second, the figures were 24 per cent of girls and 14 per cent of boys.

A total of 95 per cent of children who regularly smoked bought cigarettes from shops at least once a week. Only 2.5 per cent in 1995 and 6 per cent in 1996 reported ever having had someone refuse to sell them cigarettes. The findings are reported in yesterday's *British Medical Journal*.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Adoption procedures criticised

Local authorities are providing a poor quality adoption service, a report revealed yesterday.

Inspections of seven local authorities by the Social Services Inspectorate found the adoption process is littered with avoidable delays, poor management and monitoring. The report – *For Children's Sake Part II: An Inspection of Local Authority Post Placement and Post-Adoption Services* – documents the radical changes in the needs of children placed for adoption over the last decade.

The agency's chief inspector, Sir Herbert Laming, said adoption services must be improved so that adopted children and adults get the service they deserve.

The findings of recent inspections in seven local authorities raise questions about whether social services departments are responding to the challenges presented by adoption.

Delays in the adoption process, post-adoption support for adoptive and birth families, services for adopted adults, and a lack of commitment to inter-country adoption are the key issues which need to be addressed, he said.

Paul Boateng, Under-Secretary of State for Health, said the findings of the report must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

SHOPPING

Heatwave fuels fan sales

The recent humid weather has made fans a hot item for Britain's major electrical retailers said today.

John Lewis said its total sales were 7 per cent up last week compared with the same week a year ago, despite the temperatures making for "less than ideal" shopping conditions. Brian O'Callaghan, director of trading, said: "The remarkable number of fan sales recorded had much to do with a sparkling electrical performance."

A spokeswoman for Comet, the high street electrical chain, said sales had doubled in the last couple of weeks although she could not give figures. Dixons, which owns Currys as well as its own brand stores, said sales of fans were rising. "It is clearly down to the hot weather," said a group spokesman.

John Lewis said the hot weather had also benefited sales of garden furniture, sales of which rose by 66 per cent and gardening items, where sales were up 40 per cent.

FOOD

What sandwiches say about you

Women prefer prawns – that was the clear message that emerged yesterday from a survey of lunchtime sandwich-eating habits.

Four hundred and fifty young working women took part in the survey by Bread for Life – a campaign encouraging people to eat more bread as part of a healthy balanced diet – and one in five chose prawn on wheat germ bread as their favourite. Donna Dawson, a psychologist, feels this choice reflects an independent high-flier with an interest in health and fitness.

The bacon butty came a close second with 19 per cent of votes, revealing a traditional, romantic, sociable and home-loving woman.

Egg salad on brown bread also pulled in 19 per cent of votes indicating a confident but cautious personality type.

**NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING**

Recycled paper made up 43.6% of the raw material for UK newspapers in 1996

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3

Hyp

Hypnosis reveals backpacker's killer

Erie Silver
Jerusalem
and Jojo Moyes

A retired Israeli army officer confessed yesterday to the murder of British backpacker Max Hunter, as the law graduate's seriously injured girlfriend prepared for an emotional meeting with his parents.

Daniel Okav, a 45-year-old retired major, shot Mr Hunter, 22, and wounded Charlotte Gibb, 20, after giving them a lift from the Red Sea resort of Eilat 10 nights ago. He was arrested

at his home near Tel Aviv early yesterday after an intensive manhunt by a team of about 100 detectives, undercover officers and forensic scientists.

Mr Okav, who is married with two children, was remanded in custody for 15 days by a Beersheba magistrate. When the police picked him up, he said: "I was expecting you."

A police spokesman said Mr Okav, who works for a private transport company, could not explain why he had shot Mr Hunter. Police praised Miss Gibb for her courage, after she

was hypnotised to provide details of the murderer.

News of his arrest came as she prepared for a visit from Mr Hunter's parents - their first meeting since the attack - at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, where she is recovering.

"She is quite prepared for the meeting," said David Adlam, an oral and maxillofacial consultant. "I think if anything she is more concerned for them than she is for herself."

Mr Adlam talked in detail yesterday for the first time about Miss Gibb's injuries and

her "million-to-one" escape. He said the bullet which went through her face had amazingly done very little damage.

"I think it's fair to say it's a miracle really. The bullet managed to miss every vital nerve in her face," he said. "Had the trajectory been altered by millimetres it would have gone straight into her brain and killed her. I think it must be a million-to-one chance."

Her parents had been with her constantly in shifts, Mr Adlam said.

"Psychologically she is just

starting to come to terms with it... she is in excellent spirits, but it is only a week or so after the event and she is only really starting to come to terms with the whole thing," he said.

Before returning to England, Miss Gibb was interviewed under hypnosis, and gave the investigators information about a grey-haired man in his forties, which helped the police to build up a profile of the killer.

Police believe that Mr Okav had been to the casino at the Taba Hilton and was returning to his home, 300 miles north of Eilat, when he picked up the British couple at a petrol station around midnight on 13

August. He suddenly shot them after stopping for a cigarette on the Negev desert road. According to the police, he drove back to Taba and slept the night in the hotel.

Detectives traced the car to Mr Okav's home in the commuter village of Even Yehuda, north-east of Tel Aviv. The car and its owner were kept under surveillance. Police secretly searched the car and found Mr Hunter's fingerprints inside. Ballistics experts identified a licensed gun owned by Mr Okav as the murder weapon.

Mad dogs and Morris Men set out on holiday

Lucy McDonald and Louise Hancock

Hopes that the hot spell would continue for the bank holiday were fading yesterday with a more traditional damp holiday weekend forecast.

Despite the break in the recent heatwave, 3 million undaunted holidaymakers flocked to the coast amid predictions of chaos on the roads.

In the Peak District, the Saddleworth Morris Dancers have been collecting rushes ahead of a break in the weather in a ceremony that revives a tradition that ran up against church authority early in the last century.

In a tradition dating back to druidical times, two tons of rushes are collected each August, loaded on to a rush cart and taken to the parish church of St Chad in Saddleworth, to spread on its floor - originally to form a compost to warm the church through the winter.

In the early 19th century a local bishop objected to the church being used like a cattle shed and rush spreading in the church was reportedly abandoned. A rush cart was last pulled in anger in Saddleworth in 1921, but the ceremony was revived when the Morris men built a new cart.

Traffic on some of Britain's principal routes was moving at the speed of a rush cart yesterday afternoon, as holiday makers set off early in an attempt to beat the jams. The RAC reported seven mile northbound tailbacks on the A34 at Newbury. By mid-afternoon the M5/M6 link near Birmingham was practically at a standstill.

An AA spokeswoman confirmed: "We'd expect this area to be busy late afternoon on a Friday, but these jams have started to build about two hours earlier than normal - and it's clearly going to get a lot worse."

Steve Upsher, of the AA, said: "It's the last bank holiday before Christmas, people tend to make their plans well in advance and want to make the most of their free time whatever the weather."

The RAC cited the M4 and M5 in the West Country, and the M6 up to the Lake District as well as all routes out of London, as likely traffic hot spots.

With up to 5 million extra vehicles anticipated on the roads this weekend, the AA expects up to 45,000 call-outs.

As the dash to the coast and countryside began, holidaymakers were warned by the British Heart Foundation to take care over the weekend.

A spokesman said: "The combination of travel, hot weather and air pollution could spell a health risk for some. Travel makes people frailer and humid weather seems to make them less tolerant."

Although the weekend weather is unlikely to match the recent high temperatures, Martin Rouley, of the Meteorological Office, predicted that "despite a high risk of rain over much of the UK, with the South-East likely to experience the heaviest showers, there will be sunny periods and temperatures could reach as high as 25C."

Nevertheless, some holidaymakers are taking no chances with the notoriously fickle British weather, as record numbers went abroad. Heathrow and Gatwick were anticipating a combined total of more than a million passengers as Britons head for European destinations such as Corfu and Malaga, where temperatures are expected to reach 30C.

With the bookmakers offering odds of 4/6 that London, Glasgow or Cardiff will see rain during the bank holiday, Graham Sharpe, of William Hill, had to admit: "If there is one certainty you can always bet on, it is that bank holiday weather will be unpredictable."



Take to the hills: Aaron Daniels (centre) and fellow Saddleworth Morris Men collect rushes to be spread on the floor of the parish church tomorrow

Photographer: Carl Royle

Comics plead for BBC subscription to replace licence



Programmed for success: Birds of a Feather, one of the comic creations of Laurence Marks and Maurice Gran who attacked their BBC bosses in the MacTaggart Memorial Lecture

Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

The BBC licence fee should be replaced with a voluntary subscription of £10 a month so that the creative talent in television can be paid what they are worth, the television industry was told last night.

The comedy writers Laurence Marks and Maurice Gran made a wide-ranging attack on broadcasting bosses in the annual MacTaggart Memorial Lecture at the Edinburgh International Television Festival.

They argued that the only solution to an industry where writers are undervalued and have no creative control was to pump more money into the system by charging a realistic price for the BBC.

"In 1995/96 the average person spent nearly 24 hours a week watching television, nearly half his or her free time," said Laurence Marks. "This average person spends about 10 hours of his 24 watching the BBC. For those 10 hours of entertainment,

information, news, sport, drama and Noel Edmonds he pays, according to the BBC's own figures, about 50p per week."

"But the BBC was the main focus of their attack: 'The creative leaders within the BBC have been marginalised. The power that the creative staff once had has been usurped by legions of lawyers, accountants, business affairs executives and policy unit apparatchiks.'

"The BBC believes it must maintain market share to justify the licence fee," said Mr Marks. "This forces the BBC to shadow ITV's programming as it moves remorselessly towards the safe, the repetitive and the cloned. This is particularly noticeable in drama. If ITV has a vet," added Mr Marks, "the BBC wants a vet. If ITV has a moody cop, the BBC wants a moody one."

All broadcasters were criticised for wanting to keep too much of the money from selling programmes to themselves and were compared unfavourably to America where writers are treated and paid like stars.



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Your money, or the pet gets microwaved

Ian Burrell

Everyone knows the urban myth about the absent-minded old lady who put her poodle in the microwave in a misguided attempt to dry it out.

But the myth is being turned into reality in a sickening criminal trend adopted by robbers and thugs to intimidate their victims.

For purposes of blackmail or revenge, pets are being forced into microwaves before the

eyes of their frightened owners. If the ovens are switched on the animals are cooked from the inside with a blast of short electro-magnetic waves.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Animals said last night that it was appalled that people were prepared to subject pets to such torture and would be seeking prison sentences for those found culpable.

Scotland Yard said yesterday it was looking for a gang who seized a couple's cat and put it

in the microwave after forcing their way into their home in St John's Wood, north London.

The thieves threatened to cook the cat unless the couple gave them the combination to their safe and later escaped with antique jewellery, watches and other goods worth £18,500.

The three robbers struck as the husband, 53, parked his car at home after watching a football match at Arsenal.

They demanded the man's Rolex watch, before punching

him in the face and forcing him into the house, where they threatened to cut his 46-year-old wife's throat and kill the couple's cat.

The raiders then took the woman's Cartier watch before searching the house and using the cat as a blackmailing tool. When the safe was opened the cat was released unharmed.

But a worse fate befell Jasper, a kitten, who was forced into a microwave by a man whose advances to the animal's

owner had been spurned at a party.

Brendan Blennerhassett, 24, was jailed for six months this week at a court in County Durham after being found guilty of deliberately killing the 12-week-old kitten.

A court heard that he had carried out the attack after Jasper's owner, who he had earlier met at a nightclub, rejected him at a party later the same evening.

Vicky Allen, 20, had brought

her kitten to the party, so that it would not be left alone at home. Ms Allen cried as she told the court that she had tried to save the stricken animal: "I took it out and tried to revive it but it died."

Ann Morris, chairwoman of the bench in Houghton-le-Spring, Co Durham, said: "The torture and death of a much loved and defenceless 12-week-old kitten is a thoroughly despicable offence."

By a strange twist of fate, the

microwave was invented to meet a need to heat hamsters humanely in 1950s laboratories.

James Lovelock and other scientists developed the technology while working on experiments concerned with the preservation of living tissue.

Hamsters which had been subjected to a gloving process were to be revived through warmth without burning their skins.

Since then, partly thanks to the spread of urban myth, the

image of the pet in the microwave has become the source of dubious humour. The comedians Hale and Pace made their names through the controversy which followed an infamous sketch depicting a cat being microwaved.

The RSPCA has looked on in horror as a new form of pet torture has evolved in British homes. It has on its books a case where a 13-year-old boy killed the family whippet in the microwave for "fun".

Gold card becomes the new designer accessory

Nic Cicutti
Personal Finance Editor

There is always one in any crowd. The woman who took the plunge and finally bought brown, just as the others went for charcoal grey. The guy who got into flares, when everyone switched to straight-leg trousers, and back again.

American Express, the world's largest card company, yesterday performed a similar stunt in the financial services world, as it finally launched a gold credit card - years after the opposition cleaned up in the same market.

The new launch comes four years after an explosion in the gold sector, with the number of cards tripling from 800,000 in 1993 to well over 2.5 million today.

Saturation levels in the standard card market have led many banks to launch gold options with the aim of capitalising on higher spenders - who deliver greater profits to their issuers.

Among the 20-plus issuers to have stolen a march on American Express in the past few years is the tiny Leek United Building Society.

Pamela Roessler, marketing

manager at the Leek, 26th in the league table of UK societies, said: "We have always argued that small is beautiful. When we want a decision we don't need to go to 700 separate committees to get it."

Ms Roessler declined to give an actual number of Leek United Gold Cards issued, but said they were a "reasonable" proportion of the society's 75,000 members.

Overshadowing the epic commercial tussle between Leek United and American Express is the more significant question of whether gold cards, once the preserve of an exclusive elite, are now the vulgar playthings of a far wider segment of the population.

An American Express spokeswoman yesterday denied any such suggestion: "Our research shows that holding a gold card is rated on a par with owning a sports car or over and above having a fax machine or even going on a skiing holiday."

"Only one in 10 people have a gold card even today and you will find that these people still see them as aspirational things to have."

The card company's seeming reluctance to enter the gold market was based on the fact

that although Amex is famous for its charge cards - where you must settle your bill each month - it only launched its first standard credit card two years ago.

However, the spokeswoman added: "What people are looking for is the right brand. When people were asked what card issuer they associate with gold, they immediately said American Express."

Richard Spencer, manager of the plastic cards department at

Datamonitor, the research company, said: "Over the last few years, the market for gold cards has changed from a high prestige upper-class thing to something aimed simply at higher spenders. Some people may feel that there has been a bit of tarnishing of the exclusivity tag. But the card issuers themselves, who stand to make a lot of money from gold cards, won't really care."

Seekers of the ultimate credit card to impress friends and family may not feel the same way. The new metal to aim for - you got it here first - is platinum.

Going for Gold - The Long Weekend, p21

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The life and times of a Mean Fiddler: from junk dealer to the stock market

Vince Power is the UK's biggest music promoter. Now he wants to float his empire on the stock market

Alexandra Williams

London's king of rock'n'roll is aiming to be the king of stocks and shares.

He looked like any other middle-aged festival-goer at the Reading Festival yesterday, but Vince Power, head of the Mean Fiddler organisation, was commanding operations, and he managed to slip in a quick announcement of a plan to float his empire on the stock market.

The portly Irishman, whose company is the UK's biggest promoter of live music, is planning to expand overseas and is looking to the stock market to raise capital.

"We've just finalised our plan to float on the market in the hope of raising some capital to expand quicker. The Mean Fiddler has been expanding at maybe a rate of three, four places a year but we have such a good brand now we want to expand more quickly."

"We need to go to the market with what we've got – hopefully by November," he said.

Power is the capital's undisputed king of rock'n'roll, owning a third of the city's major rock and jazz venues. He was responsible for luring the Sex Pistols out of retirement last year and plonking them in Finsbury Park to the delight of 30,000 ageing punk rockers. At the other end of musical spectrum, he has promoted Van Morrison and Roy Orbison.

He stages four of the six big summer festivals and in June launched the American version of his Fleahop Irish music bash.

In 1989, Power rescued the Reading Festival from bankruptcy and made it profitable, turning it into the most important festival after Glastonbury. Yesterday, the first day of the three-day festival, more than 45,000 people converged on Reading. The economic benefits of



Taking charge: Vince Power at Reading yesterday and (below) two of the artists he has promoted over the years, Van Morrison and Roy Orbison. Main photograph: Andrew Buurman



take to the stage on Sunday. Born in 1947, in Waterford in Ireland, Power moved to Hemel Hempstead when he 17 and began building up a second-hand furniture business in north London. He started his first venue, Harlesden's Mean Fiddler, as a hobby in 1982.

"I snapped up a property in Harlesden for £125,000 and turned it into a Nashville-style



venue with cool beer and hot music," he said.

"I was into country and Irish traditional music but it hadn't enough pulling power so I booked The Pogues, Los Lobos,

Lone Justice etcetera. And it worked. In 1988, I got involved in the Reading Festival. I checked out similar events in Europe, staged indie music and it was an instant hit."

"I started off as a one-man band but I think I need some help now. I think it's a new era for the Mean Fiddler – it's a new time and I think, in the long term, it will be very good for us," he said.

Life for rapist who struck again

Louise Jury

A rapist who attacked a young teacher only three months after being freed from a 14-year prison sentence for another sex offence was sentenced to life yesterday as probation officers revealed that they knew he would strike again.

Christopher Clark, 46, pounced on the woman, placed a plastic bag over her head and indecently assaulted her yards from a bail hostel in Bath where he was being held on probation.

As Clark began his life sentence, probation officers said they had been "waiting for something to happen" as soon as he was freed after serving nine years of the 14-year term.

But they were helpless to prevent his release because his original sentence for rape was handed down before the 1991 Criminal Justice Act made it possible to keep offenders inside if they are still considered a risk to society.

Members of Clark's family revealed that they had pleaded with the authorities to prevent his release. And Don Foster, the Liberal Democrat MP for Bath, said the law should be tightened to prevent other dangerous offenders sentenced before 1991 being released.

Gary Redfern, Avon Probation Service's assistant chief officer, said: "There was nothing we could do and we were simply waiting for something to happen – we considered him to be dangerous. His offending had not been addressed and he had not changed. We knew Christopher Clark as a risk."

Mr Redfern defended the service which he said had been unfairly criticised in the case. Clark was considered too dangerous to be released on parole, but, under the rules operating at the time, was entitled to remission. He had been ordered to take the drug Gosercillin to destroy his sex drive.

Clark, who was nicknamed the "early bird rapist" following a string of knife-point sex attacks on women in the 1980s, had denied attacking the 23-year-old teacher.

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Blairs look a gift horse in the mouth after lunch with Lionel

Joanna Lee
Paris

Europe's two newest left-wing leaders had lunch together yesterday in the village of Saint Martin d'Oydes, in the beautiful Ariège region in south-west France. Tony Blair has been on holiday there with his family and the French Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, who was visiting his constituency of Cintegabelle, 20 miles away, drove over for lunch with his wife, Sylviane.

The atmosphere was casual. Mr Blair, who has received a royal welcome here since his arrival, looked relaxed in his holiday attire of a shirt and summer trousers. Neither man wore a tie as they strolled through the village, swamped by journalists and television cameras. Most of the 200 inhabitants of the village were also there to welcome them.

The leaders had a glass of champagne with the proud and elated mayor in the village square, where the villagers presented Mr Blair's three children with a young pony called Justin.

However, the children will not be bringing the pony - of the Pyrenees Merens breed - home with them. A Downing Street spokesman said: "The gift was very much appreciated, but the Blairs will leave the horse with a local family who also have children who are able to ride it."

He was unable to say whether the animal was given to the French family to keep or for safekeeping until the Blairs are

able to visit it again. It is thought the Blairs may have been concerned about finding adequate stabling for it in the Downing Street area.

As they walked back to the Blair holiday home for lunch, they discussed in French Mr Jospin's budget for 1998. Speaking to journalists, Mr Jospin commented on Mr Blair's youth, and the leaders said that Europe was on the lunch menu "along with some relaxing chat".

Officials at Mr Jospin's office

have been keen to underline the private nature of the lunch. A spokesman from the Matignon said: "We have no idea what the two men will discuss."

However relaxed the meeting was, it is the first time the two leaders have met on a one-to-one basis and both were keen to see

what common ground they have, particularly on Europe.

It is likely that the French leader will have tried to gain the support of his British counterpart on jobs in Europe, which will be discussed at the EU employment summit in November. Mr Jospin lobbied for this summit at the intergovernmental conference in Amsterdam in June, emphasising the importance of a "social Europe" and rejecting an EU based solely on economic issues.

Social concerns in Europe have not dampened the French government's enthusiasm for the single currency and Mr Jospin will have been keen to find out exactly where the

The pony was much appreciated, but it will be left with a local family's children'



Horse play: Tony and Cherie Blair with Justin, a local Pyrenees pony, a gift from the people of Saint Martin D'Oydes, where the family are holidaying. The Prime Minister met his French counterpart, Lionel Jospin, for an informal lunch yesterday

Photograph: AP

Military warn over Bosnian Serb split

Christopher Bellamy
Defence Correspondent

Bosnian Serb President Biljana Plavšić has won the first round of her battle with supporters of Radovan Karadžić, but she has a hard struggle ahead which could still split the Bosnian Serb mini-state in two, geographically as well as politically.

Yesterday, the Bosnian Serb military staff, based in Banja Luka, warned Ms Plavšić that it would move against her to prevent the *Republika Srpska* splitting in two.

Ms Plavšić yesterday appeared to have wrested control of the Banja Luka police from officers loyal to Mr Karadžić and

the UN has started re-training Bosnian Serb policemen in Banja Luka to create a "non-political" police force as part of its offensive defence conflict within the Serb community and to consolidate a peaceful, democratic society. But the Bosnian Serb military remains an obstacle.

The *Republika Srpska* comprises two lobes connected by the narrow Bosnian corridor running past Banja Luka in the north. The political division reflects the geographical Banja Luka, a large city in the north-west, is one of two main power centres in the Serb "entity" within Bosnia. The other is Pale in the east, the official capital, a former Serbian town outside Sarajevo. Banja Luka is Ms Plavšić's power base, and its politics have traditionally been more moderate, in contrast to Pale, where Miroslav Krivokapić, the Serb representative on the three-man Bosnia presidency, Mr Karadžić, and General Ratko Mladić are based.

A civil war between Serbs would probably split the Bosnian Serb Republic on those lines, weakening it, inviting the Muslims to push north through the Bosnian corridor, which was almost cut during the 1992-95 conflict - making it easier for Muslim and Croat refugees to return home and for NATO

troops to seize Mr Karadžić and General Mladić, who are wanted for war crimes.

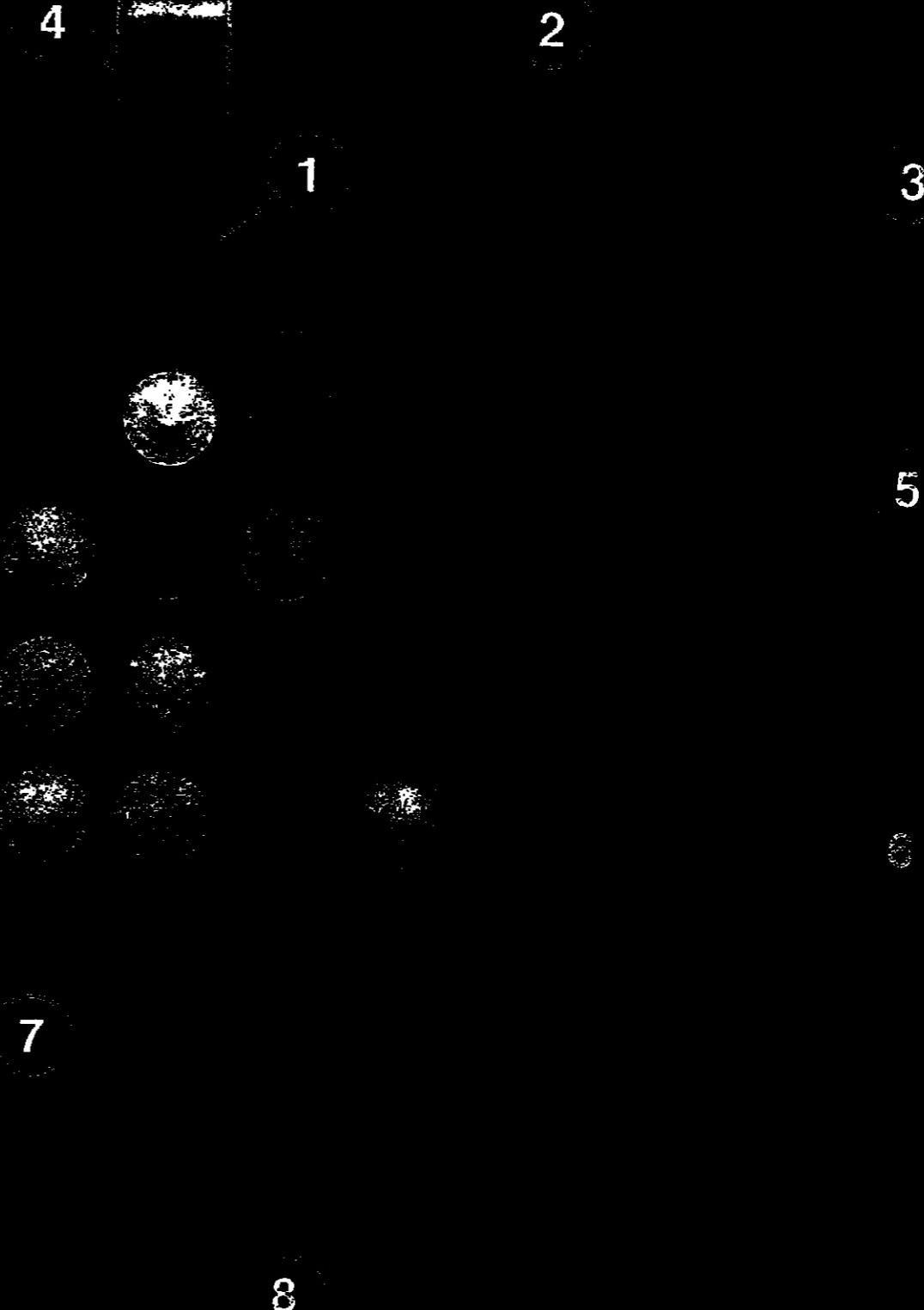
"If individual actors in the crisis should continue to destabilise and destroy the state, the army of the Serb Republic shall no longer tolerate and warn but shall undertake measures to defend integrity, sovereignty and constitutional order," the Bosnian Serb general staff said in a statement released in Pale. It was clearly aimed at Ms Plavšić, and noted that the military had warned her last month that the international community could exploit the internal dispute to weaken the Bosnian Serb "republic".

Ms Plavšić seems to be winning control of the police, leaving the military as the last bastion of pro-Karadžić forces.

On Wednesday, 350 British and Czech troops swooped to disarm pro-Karadžić police in Banja Luka who were believed to be plotting a coup against Ms Plavšić. The international stabilisation force - SFOR - reduced its active presence on the streets of Banja Luka to 250 on Thursday. Yesterday they were hoping to reduce it further although extra troops will remain on patrol until the International Police Task Force has completed investigations into alleged human rights abuses by police.

Serb policemen who want to serve in the new force are being vetted to check they have no criminal record or outstanding allegations of human rights abuses against them. In practice, they are being asked to sign a pledge of loyalty to Ms Plavšić. International officials said many police were responding throughout the region.

Plavšić has made a gaping hole in the police network and the army has refused to get involved while tacitly supporting Plavšić, a diplomatic source said last night. If the Karadžić faction is putting its faith in the Bosnian Serb military, its position is looking increasingly desperate.



TYRES - ENGINEERED IN GERMANY

international

Why Mir crew had to walk on wild side

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

The restoration of power to the Mir space station yesterday was a major step back to full operation – but the harder task may lie ahead of the three-man crew, who are having a well-earned rest this weekend from repair duties.

The biggest problem, which has yet to be tackled, will be to fix the hole in the Spektr module, caused on 25 June when a Progress supply ship crashed slowly but unstoppably into it.

Repairing that hole, which still renders Spektr unusable, will involve an outside space-walk and a patching job that has never actually been attempted on a working space-craft.

Fixing holes in spacecraft is a task that anyone undertakes lightly: if the seal is not perfect then it could fail catastrophically, and cause a repeat of the desperate five-minute scramble to seal off the module that led to power cables being cut off last time.

Nor have there been any occasions when such a fix has been required. Previously, collisions in space have either been minor – such as an orbiting paint speck which dented but did not puncture a Space Shuttle window some years ago – or total, as happened last year when a telecommunications satellite abruptly stopped working – almost certainly due to being hit by “space junk”.

However, if the hole can be fixed, using a combination of high-tech glues and simple patching, then Spektr will come back into its own as the only permanent floating laboratory presently available in space. Companies and governments in the United States, Europe and Japan are all prepared for science experiments to be performed in the exceptional conditions of space.

That is an important money-earner for Russia. Although President Boris Yeltsin yesterday pledged that the 1998 Russian budget would provide more money for space and avi-



Anatoly Solovyov



Pavel Vinogradov



Michael Foale

the faults so far

- Feb 24 - Fire breaks out when cosmonauts try to change an air filter. The crew have to wear gas masks against fumes released during the incident.
- March 6 - Cargo ship Progress fails to dock with Mir and is dumped.
- March 7 - Generator providing oxygen fails, forcing the crew to use backup chemical system.
- April 4 - Leak develops in cooling system, temporarily knocking out a device used to maintain breathable air on board.
- June 25 - Another Progress cargo craft hits Mir during practice docking, puncturing Spektr module and damaging solar batteries. July 3 - Navigation devices to keep solar energy panels lined up to the sun fail. Adjusted by next day.
- July 5 - Cosmonauts report they hear thumps and see something leaking overboard from the damaged module. Officials say they do not know what leaked but insist it was not fuel.
- Jul 17 - Crew member mistakenly pulls out a vital computer cable, prompting massive power failure.
- August 7 - Failure in automatic docking system forces amateur relief cosmonauts to go to manual docking at last minute.
- August 14 - Booster rocket which should ease landing of Soyuz capsule bringing cosmonauts back to Earth fails, giving them a rough landing but no injuries.
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THE INDEPENDENT

FOUNDED 1986

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A happy summer for the health police

Bank holidays, as any city dweller knows, are best spent at home. Streets are deserted, supermarket queues are short and a delicious quiet descends as the neighbours head for the country and the beach. Now doctors have offered an extra reason for eschewing the sybaritic delights of Clacton or Ctheroe. Going away can be bad for the heart.

Hours spent in a hot tin can jammed in a line of hot tin cans, diesel fumes mingling with the aroma of marinade sandwiches and bruised bananas while fractious kids demand "Are we there, yet?" from the back ought to make any one ill. Now the British Heart Foundation has unnecessarily warned that the combination of travel, hot weather and air pollution can spell danger for those "intent on fun". Amazing.

It has been a bumper summer for the health police. We have had warnings about the sun, the air, and the sea, about impurities in drinking water, *E. coli* O157 and nerve damage caused by vitamins (B6). But outdoing all these have been warnings about the heart.

Within the space of six weeks, at least half a dozen theories about the causes of heart disease and heart attacks have been offered by scientists. The proliferation of theories and estimates of risk leave the average reader floundering, wondering whether to change jobs, spouse, diet or holiday plans. Scientifically, there may be nothing to fault. But in public health terms it is a disaster. Any bar-room

medic trying to assess the competing arguments can only conclude that doctors are as ignorant as the rest of us – and mine's a pint, a greasy bacon sarnie and a packet of 20 please, guv.

A striking example of the difficulties the public face occurred last month. On 23 July, the National Heart Forum called a press conference to highlight Britain's poor record on heart disease measured against comparable countries and to reinforce the message on diet, exercise and smoking. These three, the experts said, accounted for most of the variation in heart disease rates and there was no other factor, either known or likely to be discovered, that had an impact of a similar magnitude on the risk.

The following day, a paper in *The Lancet*, the latest in a series to emerge from a 20-year examination of 10,000 civil servants known as the Whitehall study, showed bosses who have control over their work are less likely to suffer heart attacks than workers who don't. Those on the top floor were healthier than those on the shop floor and it was the degree of participation in decisions that accounted for most of the difference.

Reconciling these two views of the causes of heart disease demands an appreciation of relative risk. Comparing overfed, understretched (in a physical sense) Westerners with their lean, active cousins in the developing world leaves no doubt about the importance of the traditional risk factors of diet, exercise and smok-



ing. But within Western nations, differences persist between groups. When comparing British executives with British clerks, job control appears to account for almost half the variation of heart attack risk – but that is a small difference compared to the benefit (in heart disease terms) of being born in, say, Uganda.

That is only the start of the confusion. This week, researchers reported that submissive women have one third of the risk of suffering an attack compared with those who are more assertive. Earlier research has shown that aggressive, ambitious Type A personalities are more prone to attacks than relaxed Type B ones. Next week a new study will suggest that men who give blood reduce their risk by depleting their iron stores – in the same way that women do naturally through menstruation. Red wine, what your mother ate during pregnancy, and infection have also been implicated.

So, where does that leave us? Meek, non-smoking blood donors who run their own lives, eat up their greens and cycle to work shall live long enough to inherit the earth – while the rest of us enjoy life, ignore the health advice, and die young.

Science offers no simple answers. We have to learn to live with uncertainty and accept that scientific understanding proceeds like football – with much, apparently purposeless, running around punctuated by occasional flashes of brilliance that move the game forward.

The drawback is that this leaves openings for those who wish to exploit the uncertainty for their own commercial advantage. Yesterday, David Bacon, head of corporate communication at British American Tobacco, sought to muddy the clear message on smoking delivered a day earlier by Geoffrey Bible, the chairman and chief executive of the US tobacco giant Philip Morris, that cigarettes "might have" killed 100,000 Americans.

In a piece of sophistry of the sort we have come to expect from the tobacco industry, Mr Bacon sought to represent this historic admission as no more than an observation about the statistical link between smoking and lung cancer. He claimed the disease's biological cause had "still to be established".

Technically he may be right, but morally his position is bankrupt. There can be no doubt about the lethal nature of cigarettes yet this message is still being fudged three decades after it became a certainty.

On the major issues of public health – smoking, heart disease, cancer – where there is a measure of agreement, we need scientists to sign up to the basic thesis rather than squabbling over the finer points. Scientific accuracy demands an assessment both of the strength of the evidence and of the power of the conclusion. Facts are not sacred, they require interpretation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Devolution is best for Scotland and Westminster

Sir: The three letters printed today (20 August) demonstrate a lack of understanding of devolution. First, it does not duplicate effort. Over two centuries the demands upon our system of government have increased enormously, with the addition of myriad responsibilities. The UK Parliament does not have time to debate important issues in sufficient detail. As many big businesses have done, it makes sense to do things efficiently by devolving responsibility to the component parts, allowing them to consider their needs in detail and at the same time freeing up Westminster to focus on UK issues in sufficient detail.

Secondly, proportional representation will help prevent corruption, unlike the first past the post system that has encouraged corruption at both local and national level. It is highly unlikely that any party, let alone clique, will gain a majority in the Scottish Parliament, as they would need to gain more than 50 per cent of the vote to do so. Instead parties will have to co-operate with each other, agreeing on policies which are thus likely to be in tune with the wishes of the majority of the electorate.

Thirdly, there are few areas where disputes between the UK and Scottish Parliaments can develop, as their respective areas of responsibility will be clearly delineated. In the event that there are disagreements, comprehensive mechanisms are proposed in the

White Paper for addressing these in talks between the Cabinet and the Scottish Executive. Ultimately, any dispute can be referred to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

In any case, it is better that there are occasional disputes between two elected Parliaments than the feelings of deep resentment that developed in Scotland whilst subjected to 18 years of Conservative rule. For a nation that consistently elected a large non-Tory MPs it was galling to be subjected to Thatcherite experiments like the poll tax. The depth of that resentment was demonstrated on the 1 May when no Tories were elected in Scotland at all.

SAM GHIBALDAN
Press Officer
Scotland FORWARD
Edinburgh

Sir: The argument about whether or not a referendum should be held before or after the Devolution Act is passed through Parliament misses the point. (Sheena McDonald: "Labour's slippery offering to the people of Scotland", 22 August).

Tan Dalyell MP may believe that the devil lies in the detail but I doubt whether the average voter is going to base their final decision on what the Act will have to say on savings and investments, personal pensions and annuity schemes etc, nor should they. Instead, the

referendum vote should be based upon a consideration of basic constitutional principles.

Do the Scottish people want Scottish affairs to be governed by representatives directly accountable for their work, or do they trust British MPs to do the job for them? Furthermore, are Scottish people willing to take genuine responsibility for their own affairs, ie to put their money where their mouth is? That is the broad gist of the proposals, and as such is clearly outlined by the White Paper and the Labour manifesto.

These are the questions which the referendum should address, meanwhile Parliament, if it is designed for any purpose at all, is there to scrutinise the detail. That function it will be better able to perform once the basic principles have been accepted by the Scottish people. One need only recall the filibustering which accompanied the 1978-9 legislation to realise the common sense behind the present government's approach.

But just in case Sheena McDonald is correct and the voter really is about to rest their decision on the precise detail of the Devolution Act, might I suggest that we are truly democratic and have not two questions on the referendum paper but one question for every clause of the Act.

RICHARD KIRKHAM
Sheffield

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Cars, trams and trolleybuses

Sir: One city that has, proportionally, similar problems to London is Prague ("Who needs a second car?", 22 August). Built on lines completely incompatible with the motor car, and filled with both a large tourist and indigenous population, it can show John Prescott a (subsidised) solution that works.

As a regular visitor, I never attempt to use my car in the city. Parking is severely restricted to residents and where there are cars, they are comparatively expensive. The alternatives are cheap and plentiful, but their prime attraction is their reliability.

Trams have priority over all other traffic. Buses run exactly on time – again due to their priority over other vehicles. The Metro runs on time and has surroundings both pleasant and functional. A ticket costs 10 crowns (20p) and lasts for one hour after being stamped at the start of a journey. Mixing forms of travel during that hour is unrestricted.

Mussolini may have made the trains run on time, but Mr Prescott should look to Havel for his model for a transport solution, for London at least.

M. GODDARD
London SW1

Sir: Stephen Crombie (letter, 18 August) perpetuates the myth that "motorists" are on the road by choice, and have an option to use public transport.

For most motorists on the M25, for example, there is no practical public transport option, because the rail infrastructure in and around London is designed to carry people to and from the centre, not from suburb to suburb. Since many businesses have moved out from the centre to these very suburbs, their staffs have to commute from suburb to suburb.

Instead of widening the M25, expenditure on a parallel "ring rail" connecting the outer London suburbs, the radial rail services and Heathrow would be far more beneficial.

KETHT HALES
Uckbridge, Middlesex

Sir: There is a better solution to urban chaos than the tramcar.

For silent, speedy operation in town centres the trolleybus beats the tramcar any day. On holiday recently I was glad to see that this vehicle still exists in Belgium and Austria. I saw examples in daily use in Ghent, Innsbruck and Salzburg. I rode on an articulated trolleybus

from a hotel on the outskirts to the centre of Salzburg.

It had good acceleration, good bus-type accommodation and being unconstrained by tracks, was able to move to the side of the road for easy access. Its rubber tyres made for noise-free comfort. In 1952 London had the highest concentration of trolleybuses in the world. Some were even built during World War II to reduce consumption of precious imported fuel in favour of home-produced coal. Some double-deckers had a maximum capacity of 54 passengers. The only disadvantage was that two overhead wires were needed, but this was

counterbalanced by the fact that trolleybuses run on ordinary roads, with no track laying or maintenance.

D.L. SMITH
Daventry, Northamptonshire

Sir: In the laudable discussion about fewer cars, a cleaner environment and better public transport, no one appears to have considered what is for many a major problem, namely how do you get the shopping home? Our mothers and grandmothers, many of them full-time housewives, needed to shop several times a week in order to ensure fresh food and many shops at that time made regular home deliveries.

It is quite impractical to expect today's working parents, who get to a supermarket once a week after work, and often with small children in tow, to lug a full trolleybus worth of groceries home on bus or train. Unless this problem is addressed, the second car will be here to stay.

MARY MACRAE-GIBSON
Burton, Norfolk

Sir: Ministers are considering a ban on local, non-commercial traffic from the M6, giving more space for long-distance heavy-goods vehicles. I can see a vision, an M6 with loads of room for nose-to-tail trucks – hang on, it looks a bit like the mainline train that does almost the same journey each day.

MARTIN WAYNESS
Windermere, Cumbria

Sir: Has anyone mentioned car insurers as a way of controlling traffic? My son, who lives in Vancouver, Canada, travels to work daily on the bus as there is a reduced rate of car insurance on cars which are not taken into town by commuters during the week.

P. A. DAY
Woodlambpton, Preston

Loss of TV archive programmes

Sir: Whilst the wiping of *Not Only... But Also* may be undesirable ("BBC recorded local news over classic Pete 'n' Dud", 21 August), it uses questionable logic to reach the conclusion that news coverage which replaced it is of lesser value.

News items are often unique, and totally irreplaceable. Dud and Pete at least had a selection of their output preserved, and scripts are surely available for other material.

Furthermore, the fact that clearances from the archive concentrated on light entertainment and drama, leaving news coverage behind, owes much to the short-sighted behaviour by the likes of Equity on behalf of their artists. The union limited repeats of older material in favour of new productions.

Once overseas sales had been exhausted by the BBC, and with little chance of it being rescreened, much material became unusable and archiving a drain on the licence payer's money. Utilising the space for news makes commercial sense under the circumstances.

Had Equity undertaken to finance the archiving of the material in conjunction with the BBC, older programmes might still have been used.

Only the unforeseen development of domestic-video revealed that this material had further commercial exploitation potential, by which time it was too late.

SIMON DOYLE
London NW3

Sir: Comedy producer Harry Thompson describes as "cultural vandalism" the loss of episodes

from the Sixties Peter Cook and Dudley Moore series *Not Only... But Also* (report, 21 August).

But was keeping local news really given any greater priority? I understand that when BBC Manchester moved to their new headquarters on Oxford Road in the Seventies, their local news library was taken in by the North-West Film Archive at Manchester Polytechnic.

Are programmes being preserved as well as they could be today? I first became alarmed about these disappearing programmes in 1980. Since then, I have built up a collection of off-air recordings on VHS. A couple of years ago, when I heard a story that episodes from the first series of *Blackadder* had been destroyed, I contacted the BBC Film and Television Library.

They denied that any of this series was missing. I mentioned some of the other recordings that I have. When I asked about the *Carrie Lane* comedy *Butterflies*, the reply was "yes, I think we have most of those". I asked if the library would like a list of my material and was told I could send one if I wanted, but not to go to any trouble.

VHS may not be broadcast quality, but surely it is better than nothing. And those Australian *Stepney and Son* recordings that BBC2 screened were hardly good quality.

As your article points out, we do seem to see the same old, limited range of clips from a number of series. It is high time that more was done to safeguard our TV heritage.

GEOFF STAFFORD
Bedford, Northumberland

Good GPs need communication skills

Sir: I despair that a fellow member of the profession with the seniority of John Adams (Letters, 22 August) should equate high grades at A-level with skilled, empathetic GPs.

There is no evidence that those who do best at A-level achieve more than those with lower grades at either second year (2nd MB) or final exams. What we need, as Jeremy Laurance suggested ("Doctor, doctor, you're not on my wavelength", 20 August), is an effective dual system which puts weight on the ability of applicants to work together in teams and to communicate.

This would require some effort

and financial input on the part of the medical schools to organise. The 15-minute interview (and even this is not universal) simply cannot assess these skills adequately.

General practice is an exciting and dynamic speciality. But it is not the knowledge base alone which makes for good GPs. It is the ability to communicate effectively, and empathise with the patient.

Dr SARAH MATTHEWS
Department of General Practice
University of Wales College of Medicine
Llanedeyrn,
Cardiff

QUOTE UNQUOTE

I feel like the roots of a great bunch of flowers. The grower gets the praise, the flowers get the adoration, while the roots that started it all must remain under the ground unnoticed – Thomas Gallagher, father of the Oasis brothers Liam and Noel

It was like a slowly spreading pool of blood seeping out from under a locked door – Patrick Jephcott, former private secretary to Diana, Princess of Wales, on life at Kensington Palace during his seven years there

Laura Ashley did not accept that women wanted to be liberated from the home. Her anti-fashion stand led her to declare that the clothes she designed should be comfortable enough to enable a mother to bend down and pick up toys – Anne Sebba, Laura Ashley's biographer

We simply can't give roasted swans to the public this season – Derek Deane, artistic director of English National Ballet, who has ordered dancers not to sunbathe ahead of their production of *Swan Lake*'

When David Jenkins the former Bishop of Durham, retired he left a vacancy in the cast list of our national life for a barny bishop. I was passing the theatre door at the time and before I knew it, I was on stage auditioning for the role. I seem to have landed the job – Dr Richard Holloway, Bishop of Edinburgh

You know what his name is? He's called Peter. Do you think you will get on the executive, Peter? – John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister, holding up a crab and mocking Peter Mandelson's bid to win a place on Labour's National Executive Committee

Britain's policy towards its dependants used to be dignified

Sir: Your leader ("Dereliction of duty in the shadow of a volcano", 21 August) rightly points out the shame of the 1981 British Nationality Act, which stripped thousands of British citizens in dependent territories of the right of abode in the UK.

Contrary to accepted wisdom, cricket in the UK is a sport which is truly enjoyed by only a small minority but which gets far more

residents of the island of St Helena, and its dependent islands. When one of these islands, Tristan da Cunha, suffered its own volcanic eruption in 1961, the islanders were evacuated 6,000 miles to the UK until the island was safe to re-inhabit. In those days – when Britain had a more

dignified policy towards its dependent territories – the islanders were still full British citizens and were able to choose whether to stay in Britain or return home to Tristan. Only a handful chose to stay.

SAUL BILLINGSLY
London NW

the saturday story

The little people of Paisley

The scandal in the west of Scotland has caught the nation's attention, but it's just a typical tale of small town corruption says Christian Wolmar

The councillors of Renfrewshire were on their best behaviour at their meeting on Thursday. There was no shouting or screaming and very few interruptions. This was unprecedented. The meetings in the Sixties council headquarters in Paisley are usually as brutal as the architecture of the building, with confrontations between Labour and the Scottish National Party, falling just short of the physical. The police have been called several times, not to deal with the public, but to control the councillors.

Conscious of the presence of a large contingent of journalists, the councillors managed to moderate their behaviour, but not their language. The SNP leader, Bruce McFee, a big man with weight problems, like many in this drama, was rather too pleased with his own inventiveness, ranting about the Labour Party's "nest of vipers" and its "cesspit" of politics. Labour were like an "authoritarian junta," according to his deputy, Jim Mitchell.

It was all over the top, and so is the whole Paisley politics affair. These are little people,



Local hero: a statue of Sir Peter Coats, of the thread company J&P Coats, in the heart of Paisley
Photograph: Tom Kidd

McMaster were elected for the seats. Others, such as Mr Mack, suggest that the real war began in 1992, when Nancy Allison, the present Provost (the north-of-the-Border equivalent of mayor), was stopped from becoming provost of the now-defunct Renfrew council at the last minute, by an alliance of the opposition and some Labour councillors.

Mrs Allison is still a powerful figure. Her little gang withdrew from the day-to-day politics of the council in a sulk, and attended few meetings until its re-formation as Renfrewshire, a

more powerful council. Renfrewshire is controlled – just – by Labour. Several existing councillors found themselves dropped as candidates for the new authority, and the Allison faction took control.

The Allisons are allied to Irene Adams, MP for Paisley North, and united in their dislike of Tommy Graham who, when it looked as if either he, Adams or McMaster would lose their seats in boundary changes, promptly set up an office in Paisley, outside his constituency. This was also the time when, mysteriously, all the inhabitants of an old people's home found themselves unwittingly signed up as Labour party members. All these carpetbagging efforts proved unnecessary when the boundary commission retained

the existing number of parliamentary seats.

There are also the usual accusations of patronage and nepotism flying around Paisley, but it has already been much investigated, with little success. It started, as many such stories do, with good intentions. In the late Eighties Ferguslie Park, on the fringes of the town, was the worst area of Paisley, with a reputation for harbouring gangsters in its mean three-storey tenements. FCB was set up to create jobs in the area: the council, along with the Scottish Office and the Strathclyde Region, sank £200,000 into the project. FCB thrived for a while, but it went bust last year, and £321,336 is still unaccounted for.

According to a liquidator's report leaked to the local Paisley

Daily Express, the money was supposed to have been paid to untrained casual staff, but there are doubts as to whether these people ever existed. Mr Revie, who was also Mr Graham's election agent, denies any knowledge of the affair and seems to have had little role in the actual running of the company. As Mr McFee points out, his suitability as a director of the company, protecting the council's investment is questionable. But Mr Revie is needed to guarantee Labour's hold on the council, therefore he retained his post at Thursday's meeting.

Then there is the bogey of Militant. Mr Mack and the SNP accuse the leadership, including the Labour leader, Hugh Henry, of being Militant stooges, but there is little evidence. Mr Henry admits to having been involved in Militant in the late Eighties, but says he left long ago.

There are no heroes in this story, and the villains are pretty mild. There are no councillors swanning about in expensive cars or living in houses paid for by developers, as there has been in Doncaster, another rotten Labour borough. Take Tommy Graham, the Renfrewshire West MP who has been suspended for spreading malicious rumours about his colleagues. Senior local Labour figures are not exactly complimentary about him. "He's an arsehole and should never have been made an MP. But he's not evil," said one. Mr Graham is not accused, as originally thought, of having contributed to Mr McMaster's depression through rumour-mongering, but he did not help his own cause when he blurted out to the local evening paper that the dead MP was a drunk who consumed "doubles and doubles". As a fellow MP put it, "Tommy came up from the hard school, and he's capable of being pretty vicious when he attacks."

This is a major issue, but it is about democracy, not corruption. The question is: how can democracy function when the local people are prepared to elect whatever donkey is wearing the red rosette?

Labour has controlled the west of Scotland for generations. The SNP has made few inroads in urban areas, the Tories have been wiped out, the Lib Dems are, as ever, on the margins. But Labour's domination is helped by the electoral system. In Glasgow, for example, Labour has 93 per cent of the seats on 61 per cent of the vote. The argument for proportional representation is overwhelming to many, both inside and outside the party, who reckon that without it, there will be more Paisleys and Doncasters tarnishing New Labour's image. In fact, Labour spokesmen have found a novel way to reassure referendum voters worried that their party may dominate the new, devolved legislature in Edinburgh. They point out that the proportional representation planned for that body makes it unlikely that Labour will ever have a majority there.

Mr Graham is an uninspiring but loyal Labour hack, a bit of a buffoon with a sharp tongue, who has mostly toed the line, apart from indulging in the infighting which passes for politics in Renfrewshire. He weighs 20 stone, and is a constant smoker; there are fears among fellow MPs that this affair will damage his health.

Under pressure to be seen to be doing something, Labour has launched another inquiry into events in Paisley. But we have been here before. There have been half-a-dozen inquiries into FCB by agencies ranging from the Scottish Office to the Royal Bank of Scotland, in response to allegations by Mrs Adams that it had been used as a front for laundering drugs money and other criminal activity. None has so far come

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karen krizanovich

There's a woman back home who replies to the shop clerk's cheery "Have a nice day" with "Don't tell me what to do." This is a global right. If she wanted to buy the local church, remodel it and then proudly announce that she is installing a black bidet in her bathroom, then it is her inalienable right to do so – to be tasteless, in other words.

Style magazines and newspapers make like they know what's in and what's out. But, as the Versace knock-knock joke goes ("Knock-Knock." "Who's there?" "Versace." "Versace who?" "Ah, that's the fashion business."), fashion is at best a grace note – meant to be played and then forgotten. That means everybody gets it wrong, but it doesn't matter. So here I am, as promised last week, telling you a bit about how to be cool. You can be like me – desperately trendy – if you follow these simple Trendy Rules.

1. Be there ASAP. If you haven't checked out a new place to shop, eat or be seen within four weeks of its opening, don't bother at all. You're a leader, on the cutting edge of what life's all about (which is, basically, spending more money than you make, buying stuff you don't need and wasting precious time that you will want back when you are lying on your deathbed). Honestly, if you don't have children, what else is there to do? You can only read for so long before your life gets fired.)

2. You are where you eat. All you McMuffins, out of the pool.

3. Technophobia no longer makes you seem like Holmes's Dr Watson. If you can't operate a computer, a Pison or a Swiss army knife, you should be ashamed of yourself.

4. Know the difference between old-good and new-good. For example, there is really only one palpable difference between the vulcanised fat-free muffins at the Seattle Coffee Company and those at the Beverly Hills Bakery in Kensingtonbridge. One delivers.

5. By the time anyone else finds out what's trendy, you've already moved on to the next trend. Why? Because a) you're a leader, b) you are insatiably curious and the credit card people keep lifting your limit, c) you are neurotic and d) you don't have a recognisable raison d'être.

6. Being trendy is hard work, which must look effortless. Remember key phrases, like "This old thing," when the tag is still on it.

7. Always remove the red sales stickers from the soles of your shoes.

So how cool am I? I am so cool I wear Cutler & Gross sunglasses, not the prohibitively expensive, they-saw-me-combing-Porsche spectacles. As much as I love the movie *Men In Black*, I wouldn't dream of wearing Ray-Ban Predator 2s. Sure, they wear 'em in the film. But at the end of the movie, the cool MIB are wearing another brand. (Actually, I wouldn't touch a pair of Ray-Bans because their publicist mulishly refused to send me any freebies. She obviously

doesn't know who I am – I was in *Private Eye* once. Fie on her.)

I'm so cool I wouldn't drive a Honda – especially a free one, unlike Tara Thingie-Thingie (apparently known as the Plank). Honda? That's for people who punch a hole in the front of the microwave and continue to use it. Back home, they're for aspiring trailer trash. Betsy Joe's got one to go to her classes in How Astrology Affects Your Mascara. One delivers.

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my friend John's coffee table. (John is a trend-monger like me).

A trap, no doubt. They're candles. Soap. Stuck down with epoxy – anything to get me back for eating that sweetie last time. We don't have much Merano glass in Illinois but when we do, it's shaped properly, like a swan or a clown. Inedible things shouldn't pretend to be food, not with so many hungry people around.

"They're new," John gestures to the bars. "I've got all three flavours from the manufacturer. You can't buy them yet but he's got them? La-de-da."

"You don't like chocolate, John."

"I know." (Touché. Smug sonofagun.)

"So what do you think of the new Oasis?"

"Bored to death," he says.

"America doesn't think the V-1 shines out of their bottoms, either," I reply.

"The V-1?"

"Oh dear! You don't know, do you? It's the latest craze. Nazi Rhyming Slang. V-1 – sun!"

"No!"

"Rudolf Hess!" I affirm. (Got him.)

One pearly Hitler Youth poking between his lips, a blush spreading over his master race, he snarls. "If you want to win the style war, you've got to be prepared to feel the breaking wind of fashion against your cheek."

"Isn't that a misquote from Fitzgerald?"

"I ask."

"OK, you win."

kid cachet

For today's celeb, a love child is a necessity - more flattering than a handbag and less likely to insult you in public than a girlfriend



glenda cooper

Question: What do Peter Snow, Clare Short, Imran Khan and Bill Cosby have in common? Answer: They have all been approached by this season's latest fashion accessory - someone claiming to be their love child.

For the celebrity *de nos jours*, a love child is necessary, a more flattering accompaniment than a handbag and less likely to insult you in public than a girlfriend. (Some style guru should tell Dodi Fayed that a sobbing ex-fiancée is just so last year; in fact, it's surprising that his media-savvy squeeze hasn't set up a charity for love children or adopted one.)

This week, Peter Snow provided an object lesson in dealing with unexpected offspring. The Sultan of Swing (we were previously unaware how much he swing it) is said to be delighted at the discovery of his son Mathieu, the result of a liaison 33 years ago. When Mathieu rang up, Mr Snow said: "Don't tell me you're my son. Let's find out... Are you tall, dark and handsome?" Luckily for both he was.

Clare Short was similarly ecstatic when reunited with her son Toby, whom she had given up for adoption. "I want everyone to know, I want to show him off. It's just a happy story," she said.

These cases contrast starkly with Bill Cosby and Imran Khan, both of whom deny they fathered their alleged daughters. Cosby has just taken a DNA test to see if he is the father of Autumn Jackson, who was recently convicted for threatening to reveal she was his love child unless he paid her \$40m. And earlier this month Imran Khan challenged Sita White, mother of five-year-old Tyrian, to take him to court in Pakistan after Los Angeles Superior Court ruled "by default" that he was the father.

But handled carefully a love child offers obvious advantages for both parties. First, they are likely to get on because the natural parent never had to be the one to say, "No we're not going to the shops today... Have you done your homework?... I'm putting a lock on the phone"

... I've asked you three times will you turn that rubbish down, I can't hear myself think."

Children on the other hand can be grateful their new parents never knew of their secret addiction to Duran Duran, their bizarre clothes taste as a sixth former, or the epic silk they went through which lasted from their thirteenth birthday to sixteen and a half.

Second, it seems to be a positive career boost. Would Toby Graham have been a solicitor in the City if he'd stayed with Clare, or Mathieu a rich French banker? No, poor Toby would have spent his teens furtively handing out Labour posters praying his mates didn't spot him, and Mathieu would have been on swingometer polishing duty while struggling to pronounce sephologist.

But there are some rules. Love child, impress on your mother not to give you a silly name. Toby and Mathieu got well with their parents; Tyrian and Autumn do not. No one is going to believe you if you ring up and say, "Hello, I'm Fantasia and I'm your love child."

Parent, don't try to emulate

Peter Snow. The man has done it with panache, you won't live up. The thought of the Prince of Wales

confronted by a child

claiming to be his saying: "Are you not very tall with a - well you know, sort of, ears?"

is too excruciating to bear. Similarly Peter Stringfellow: "Hi, are you a sex god with a long blond mane and a propensity for younger and younger girlfriends?"; "Only the first two," his alleged daughter might reply.

Instead acknowledge your child gracefully, open your heart to the newspapers (*Hello!* if you're really lucky) and you're guaranteed to win Caring Parent of the Year.

Although there is a cautionary tale when praying for some past indiscretion to come to light. The late Hughie Green may have made it back on to every front page but would you really want everyone to think your love child is Paula Yates?

As soon as you move to the country you realise that weather only really happens in cities. Out here in the wilds of North Essex, everyone lives inside huge, insulated cars, smearing the occasional lost cyclist or pedestrian against the hedgerows. It is perfectly safe to open the windows, here where even the attempted theft of a car makes the front page of the local paper. No noise drifts through - only a cooling, neutral breeze, that might as well be canned and sprayed.

Only in the city does it smell of summer: the sour, gritty elixir of dust and diesel that's more romantic and more powerful than any season that Wordsworth or John Clare could experience. In the city, the weather is not an option but an inescapable feature of every day. The Tube train is 100ft underground is far closer to nature than you could ever get lolling around in the deserted acres of the Swan Meadow car park in Saffron Walden.

In the city, the weather is something primal and apocalyptic. So far this year we have had a period of snow, followed by a period of rain, followed by a period of sunshine. All of them have threatened the immediate end of civilisation, even if this ends seems to change from month to month. There used to be a joke about the weather in Seattle: if you didn't like it, you needed only to wait five minutes and a new one would come along. Now it seems that if you don't like the upcoming end of the world, you need only wait five days for another apocalypse to impend.

Global warming is especially useful here, since it has at various times this year been produced as the explanation for exceptionally cold weather, exceptionally hot weather, and the exceptionally exceptional weather that we now have every month. There are even some people who claim that global warming does nothing, and that what we are facing is simply a periodic chaotic fluctuation in the climate, which will lead to nothing worse than an ice age.

It has been difficult ever to take these things entirely seriously, even since the historic day in 1982 (an exceptionally hot year in Sweden) when Joe Strummer came out as a closet William Rees-Mogg fan and sang: "The ice age is coming, the sun's zooming in." But perhaps his brain had been fried in the heat.

An American friend, a neighbour up the road, keeps goats and a flock of rare sheep, as befits her Christian beliefs. "The heat wave reminds me of Florida where I grew up," she says. "Everyone goes around

saying 'I think I could think if I tried, but why bother?' The goats, incidentally, love the heat. The sheep demand watering three times a day, which casts doubt on the celebrated proof that heaven is hotter than hell. This is based on impeccable Biblical scholarship: the temperature of hell cannot be higher than 444.6C, for if it were, the lake of brimstone which features so prominently in the brochures would boil away. On the other hand, the prophet Isaiah promises that the sun will shine 50 times as brightly in heaven as it does on earth, which would require a temperature of 525C.

However, one man qualified to know disputes this theory: the Rev Dr Tom

Ambrose, of Ely, whose doctorate is in geology. He points out that if hell is located towards the centre of the earth, the pressure may be high enough to allow for a much greater temperature than that at which brimstone boils at sea level, so it may be hotter than heaven after all. This is a great advance in human knowledge, since it disproves the popular theory that hell is somewhere on the Northern Line. Right people, but too shallow.

The one unequivocal effect of the heat is to wipe out people's memories. As we

slump in the heat like candles melting, how many people can remember that Wimbledon

was nearly washed away, or

that the Glastonbury festival looked like the Battle of the Somme without the fun? Or that these excitements were immediately followed by a clutch of headlines explaining we were in the grip of a drought? I know it is hot now, and the Bordeaux vintage is coming in exceptionally early (though in California, the growers are using low-flying helicopters to blow rain away from their vines). But it is only eight weeks since summer was abolished for all time by the great floods.

Perhaps the problem is aggravated by the fact that most national newspapers are written by people who live in London, and must commute out to work in skyscrapers on

the fringes. From high up in these towers the world looks almost as dramatic as it does from an aeroplane. There is never a normal view: sights and weathers that are from street level utterly quotidian become huge, dramatic pageants of light and silence. Even on days when nothing seems to be happening, the flat wastelands of east London gain a sunnier, metallic glitter, as if out of a Graham

Greene novel. And so the weather stories grow ever more dramatic. Steel in May? Britain is in the grip of arctic weather.

Three months later, we are headed for a Mediterranean climate, or perhaps one even hotter than the Mediterranean, given that a Cumbrian rare breeds farm has been daubing Factor 15 sunblock on its Vietnamese pot-bellied pigs. If the weather really has got too hot for Vietnamese animals, it may require a more serious explanation; and I believe I may have found it.

Earlier this year, in the *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, Dr Roger Nelson, of Princeton University, reported that the weather really was better around the university than chance would predict. Specifically, it seldom rains on Commencement Day, when 10,000 students gather in the open air. If it does rain, they have to gather, and steam, indoors, so there is a great deal of prayer for sun when the day comes up. And when he examined the records, going back 36 years, he found that over the four-day Commencement Day weekend Princeton was rained on less, and less often, than six neighbouring regions. The difference was not huge: a matter of 5 per cent. But it was noticeable, and the explanation which struck him was the one half-jokingly believed in by the university itself: that positive thinking can sometimes affect the weather. If it is the case that concentrated human longing can affect the weather, it would explain a lot of things. The rain when England play Australia - has anyone done an analysis of whether it rains more when England plays a stronger team, or would it make no difference, because they never play any other sort of cricketers?

The rain in Wimbledon is another obvious case. Of course, this year it rained and British players did well, but no one was expecting them to, and the rain had probably been ordered in advance.

This month's heat wave is simply a reaction to all the longings expressed in June, so watch out. Every time you groan and long for rain and cool, soft breezes, you store up trouble in heaven. Your prayers will be heard: the weather will swing once more in wild exaggeration. By winter, I predict, Britain will be gripped by arctic weather. Snow will fall.



So far this year we have had snow, followed by rain, followed by sunshine. All of them have threatened the immediate end of civilisation ...

Rebellion is not what it used to be



Trevor Phillips
The nearest
we now
get to
youthful
subversion
of the
social order
is the
activity of a
few anoraks
on the
Internet

All that said, the episode leaves me feeling a little uneasy. Is this what generations of adolescent protest has come to - this sensible, moderate, pragmatic, basically unthreatening wagging of the finger at a failure to deliver our promises? The nearest we get to youthful undermining of the social order is the activity of a few anoraks on the internet. Worse still, young people's protest is all too often understood and supported by parents. Now, that's seriously weird.

The role of those unsatisfied by responsibility and experience should be to compel the rest of us to stare at the ugly gap between what we say we want to achieve and what we actually do. Thank you, for example, Swampy, Animal and Co for reminding us that we shouldn't whine about congestion and pollution whilst searching for the keys to our family's second car.

But part of the value of youthful rebellion is that parents shouldn't even be able to understand it, never mind support it. A society in which new ways of seeing, being and speaking are no longer being invented is probably ready for the undertaker.

Paradoxically, some of the more challenging views in our country come from people who could not by any stretch of the imagination be called youthful. How can it be that the most eloquent voice in the debate over the legalisation of drugs is that of

Mike Goodman, the forty-plus boss of the charity Release?

I am alone in thinking it strange that the most potent threat to the two-car family is the middle-aged, Jaguar-driving, Deputy Prime Minister? Worse still, for those interested in equality, how does it happen that the loudest voices of protest belong to such as Lord Hattersley, who could be called young, I suppose, but only relatively, to the octogenarian La Pasionaria of the Labour movement, Baroness Castle. These people should no longer have to carry the burden of rebellion.

I think that young people are showing a deplorable lack of manners and consideration in not picking up the torch.

You may say that I have a hidden motive here, given that I devoted several years of my own life to the 1970s equivalent of tunnelling - strikes, pickets and occupations - and that I am merely trying to gloss over the fact that a succeeding generation has found these tactics wanting.

Possibly, but my complaint is less about tactic than about ambition. It is utterly pathetic that my generation should find Ossie unthreatening and The Spice Girls cute. But neither of these groups could be regarded as a menace to society; far from it - their protest is of the most conservative kind. They don't want to tear down the social order; they just want to get higher in the rankings. This is so disappointing. I've yet to dis-

cover a teenage enthusiasm against which I can sternly warn my children, without facing my pitying gaze which tells you that the last thing they'd get involved with is any of your dad student passions. Sex, drugs, rock & roll? Yeah, right, why don't you get a life, Dad?

Of course, youthful rebellion has another purpose. It is to point clearly to where the previous generation has failed in its own ideals.

The sixties teenagers were peaceniks, partly because their parents had promised in 1945 never to go to war again, and then could not resist the temptation of conflict.

They embraced sexual liberation because their parents created a rigid and repressive sexual code and then repeatedly transgressed it.

In our cases, there is some justification for the mild attack by young people on the environmental record of a 40-plus generation brought up with a commitment to a better cleaner ecological system.

But perhaps the pragmatic down-to-earth revolt of people like Sarah Briggs points to another issue. Their rebellion, if it exists, is against the failure of the institutions of public power and public service - schools and colleges, the monarchy, local government and Parliament itself. As we never tire of hearing, their heroes are individualistic, oversized personalities with the chutzpah to take on public officials in pursuit of their own per-

sonal fulfilment - Ian Wright, Richard Branson, Liam Gallagher, Anita Roddick. Enthusiasm for the paranormal, and the paranoia industry led by *The X-Files* are tokens of a growing belief that all government is a conspiracy against the people. Even their much-reported dislike of racial bias is less about the way that bigotry interferes with the possibility of achieving equality, and more about its effect on the right to compete.

This is worrying. At the very moment that the Blair project is trumpeting a return to community, young people's real interest look to be racing off in the opposite direction. They think hippie communes are soppy and they don't want to be forced to march to the beat of some monolithic enterprise with rules, regulations and hierarchies, even if it's for the public good. This all plus a premium on restoring confidence in the ability of collective institutions, whether they're hospitals, schools, local councils or even the local jobcentre to do what they promise to do.

Otherwise we can foresee the key to modern rebellion becoming individualism. And what is the paradigm of individualism in our time? Will we see a young people's protest over their right to run their own ecologically sound cars whenever they want to? You can see the placards now: "What Young People Really Want - The Right To Drive".



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obituaries / gazette

Anna Plowden

Anna Plowden was one of the foremost object conservators of her generation and made significant contributions to the techniques and practice of conservation. Her interest was not contained to her own business, but also extended into membership of the Board of Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum and of various advisory bodies in the field of conservation.

She was born in 1938, the second of four children and the elder daughter of Edwin and Bridget Plowden (later Lord and Lady Plowden). She inherited from them her clarity of intelligence, her industriousness, her directness of manner, her undemonstrative but unwavering integrity, and her readiness to devote her energies with unstinting commitment to public service where she thought that there was a worthwhile contribution for her to make.

After school at New Hall, Chelmsford, she spent the academic year 1962-63 on the Diploma Course in Conservation at the Institute of Archaeology in London University, and was duly awarded her diploma. That led to a Fellowship awarded by the British School of Archaeology which made it possible for her to work on the conservation and restoration of the Nimrud Ivories in the Museum of Iraq.

In 1965, back in England, she started a one-woman freelance business in conservation, specialising in the conservation of archaeological bronzes. She was the first scientifically trained objects conservator to work in the private sector. During this time she undertook the cleaning of a set of Khmer bronze figures from Cambodia, now in the Rockefeller Museum; the removal of a wall-painting at Fort Jesus in Mombasa; the removal of wall-paintings and armorial shields from Lincoln's Inn's 16th-century gatehouse, which was being demolished, and their

restoration and replacement; and the artificial re-glazing of 5,000 bricks in the replica building put up in its place.

As if this were not enough,

she became a part-time lecturer at the Institute of Archaeology, where she taught practical conservation, and the moulding and casting of archaeological artefacts.

In 1968 she established her own company, Anna Plowden Limited, specialising in the conservation and restoration of archaeological and fine art objects. A year later she began to work in conjunction with Peter Smith (R&R) Limited, and expanded the work of the company to include the conservation and restoration of all metal-work, stonework and organic materials (for example wood and leather).

The business flourished and grew, and in 1983 they formed a joint company, Plowden and Smith Limited, of which she was the Managing Director. She was a director of Recollections Limited from 1986 to 1993, and chairman of Art Services Limited from 1994 to 1997.

She was also the co-author of *Looking After Antiques*, published in 1987.

Her business went through a difficult time in the recession of the early 1990s – conservation tends to be one of the casualties of recession – but she weathered that, and had the satisfaction of presiding over its return to prosperity as the economy recovered.

Anna Plowden readily responded to the demands which her success brought upon her to involve herself in public work: for example, as a Fellow of the international Institute for Conservation; chairman from 1979 to 1983 of the Conservation Committee of the Crafts Council; a member from 1987 of the Conservation Advisory Committee of the Museums and Galleries Commission; a member from 1987 of the Council of the Textile Conservation Centre; Trustee of the

Edward James Foundation from 1990, and of the St Andrew's Conservation Trust at Wells from 1987 to 1996; and from 1990 a member of the Council of the Royal Warrant Holders Association, of which she was to have become the President next year.

In 1990 the Prime Minister appointed her to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum. The V&A has a sizeable Conservation Department, extending over all the materials which feature in its collections, and it was to be expected that she would take a special and very knowledgeable interest in the work of that department. But her interest was by no means confined to conservation; she took a strong interest in, and found time to be a regular visitor to other departments as well and her observations were always extremely penetrating and to the point.

She was a very conscientious trustee: she was clearly delighted to be able to play a part in the V&A's affairs, and took a keen interest in its staff – curators, professional and technical staff and warders alike. One of her last visits to the museum, earlier this year, was to sit in on a training event for warders. She won the unqualified respect and affection of her colleagues on the board and of all the staff at the museum. In 1997 she was deservedly appointed CBE for her services to conservation.

Plowden was a quiet and private person, reserved and unassuming, with a detached and amused outlook on life, and on her fellow men and women. But, she knew her own worth, and when she contributed to a discussion, which she did sparingly, it was because she had something relevant and useful to add to it, which her colleagues knew they would benefit from hearing. She had a great capacity for friendship, and for loyalty



Industrious and with unswerving integrity: Plowden between two red sandstone figures at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery which she restored in the late 1980s

Photograph: Mayotte Magnus

to her friends and colleagues and to the institutions in which she worked.

Anna Plowden had great inner strength, and she sustained a long illness, which involved much painful and debilitating treatment, and periods of re-

mission which were all too brief, with admirable courage and patience, with characteristic determination and, at the end, with resignation. She retained a youthful complexion and appearance, so much so that it was a surprise to know

that she was nearly 60 when she died.

Robert Armstrong

Anna Bridget Plowden, conservator: born 18 June 1938; CBE 1997; died London 21 August 1997.

Arthur Prysock



Prysock: soothing baritone

Photograph: Billy Pierce

as Nat "King" Cole and Johnnie Ray.

Although Prysock recorded "Good Rockin' Tonight" and "I Just Want To Make Love To You", he did not want to change his style to fall in with the popularity of rock'n'roll music. On the other hand, his brother, Red, recorded a classic honking sax album *Rock'n Roll*. From time to time, he worked with Red in shows billed as "The Sax and the Voice".

In 1964, Prysock signed with

the famed jazz label Verve, and made the best records of his career including *Art and Soul* (1966), *I Must Be Doing Something Right and This Is My Beloved* (both 1968).

During this period, he also appeared at Carnegie Hall and hosted his own television show. He was teamed with Count Basie, notably for the album *Arthur Prysock/Count Basie* (1965), which featured seven saxophonists, but Basie does not even mention Prysock in his autobiography.

Prysock's deep voice was well suited to commercials and his series for Léonore beer was well-known in America. He also made the charts with a narration, "A Working Man's Prayer" (1968), written by the country singer Ed Bruce. As with many black vocalists, Prysock made a country album: *Today I Learned Loving You Again* (1979).

By the 1970s, Prysock was playing cabaret and club engagements around America. In 1976, prompted by his 14-year-old daughter Janine's enthusiasm for the film *Saturday Night Fever*, he cut a disco album with Billy Paul's producer, John Davis, and the Monster Orchestra called *When Love Is*

New. The title track was a Top Ten R&B single and was followed by "I Wantcha Baby" and "You Can Do It".

He returned to cabaret work, and subsequently received critical acclaim for two albums that were more in keeping with his personality, *A Rockin' Good Way* (1985) and *This Guy's In Love With You* (1986).

Arthur Prysock has left a legacy of around 500 recordings.

Very few have been released on CD – nothing in the UK – and those that have are usually on compilation albums. They are waiting to be rediscovered. The first moves were made by Michael Parkinson in his *Sunday Supplement* on BBC Radio 2.

He has been featuring Prysock in past months and no doubt record buyers are looking for his work in the stores. If a complete collection were to be released, it could be filed variously under Jazz, Blues, Easy Listening and even Country and Western.

Prysock had a way with words and with stage situations which might leave a critic in the dark if required to dictate an account of it within minutes of curtain call at the Royal Exchange in Manchester – where most of his stuff was done – but kept one unexpectedly and inexplicably alert, with the lit and the charge of the language. He had espe-

cially

Spencer Leigh

Arthur Prysock, singer: born Spartanburg, South Carolina 2 January 1929; died Hamilton, Bermuda 21 June 1997.

to the obituary by Michael Peppiatt, 1 August.

During the visit Maier took us,

unbelievably, to her lavatory.

There were some nails sticking

out from the wall and round these these was a linear composition in wire made by Picasso himself whilst still stool". She had kept this, inviolate, ever since.

Gerald McLarnon

Gerard McLarnon was a playwright who never sought popularity. Nor did he ever find it. But he knew how to make us sit up in the playhouse, which is half the battle. If he never bothered to fight the other half, it must be because his dialogue and his characters came to him in such a vivid and baffling rush that there was no time to sit down and shape them for Shaftesbury Avenue or Broadway, Hollywood or television.

Yet directors and actors liked the sense of theatricality which pervaded his work. There was thought behind it – muddled thought maybe – but it had without doubt a stag tang amid its Celtic twirls and self-conscious flourishes.

McLarnon was an Ulsterman and a man of the theatre. He had known that from his youth. Not that he had ever set foot in a playhouse or inherited any theatrical connections.

But the stage somehow summoned him when he was being brought up near Belfast, and he went first into the great Sir Frank Benson's company of touring Shakespearians, then into something even better (for an Irishman), the equally great Anew McMaster's roving troupe, which used to play the fit-ups in Ireland and inspired anybody who spent even the briefest time with them.

Then came a post-war stint for Hugh Hunt at the Bristol Old Vic – still as an actor, though without much success. This is when he began to write plays. McLarnon was a Catholic; *Unhallowed* was his first title. The Arts Council gave it a prize and the Perth Repertory Theatre acted it. With religious, political, cosmic zeal he went on writing as if he were after the deepest meanings of existence while searching for a theatrical formula.

In 1952, McLarnon wrote a kind of bedroom farce, *The Wrestler's Honeymoon*, which even reached the Duchess Theatre (as *The McRoary Whirl*) with a largely Irish cast. It seemed to London playgoers about as tacky as a farce could get.

Yet Laurence Olivier in his managerial heyday had taken it under his wing, before getting cold feet and hiding his link with it. The play's humour existed in a famous wrestler marrying before an important professional bout and attempting not to lose his virility. If the critics were not amused the audience was; but the romp remained a three-day wonder.

McLarnon had a way with words and with stage situations which might leave a critic in the dark if required to dictate an account of it within minutes of curtain call at the Royal Exchange in Manchester – where most of his stuff was done – but kept one unexpectedly and inexplicably alert, with the lit and the charge of the language. He had espe-

cially the gift for knowing how to seize attention, if not how to satisfy it.

They were surely not bored in Belfast in 1958 when McLarnon's next champion after Laurence Olivier – Sir Tyrone Guthrie – directed, in his exhilarated way, *The Bohème*, a lament for Ireland's Catholic-Protestant misery in which, on 12 July of all nights of the year, a Protestant girl and a Catholic sailor try to take their lives together in a bonfire amid the hurly-burly of the Orangemen celebrating the Battle of Boyne.

The production set Belfast in uproar. Banners of protest were unfurled; marches were provoked. Any transfer of the play to the imminent Edinburgh Festival seemed out of the question. As Guthrie himself cynically observed: "I think it is good thing it has aroused public interest".

But the play made McLarnon force to reckon with the critics went on pluckily reckoning with his art for most of the next four decades in such plays as *The Saviour* (1967), to which the Lord Chamberlain took strong objection until its rude words were removed and the action shifted into a deconsecrated church, set somewhere off the west coast of Ireland in a quarrelsome post-nuclear society; *The Trial of Joan of Arc* (1969), in which Dilys Hamlett had an emotional ball; and assorted versions of Dostoevsky, Gogol and Sophocles, which extended McLarnon's global influence as a playwright and librettist.



McLarnon: a stag tang

He also wrote for radio. One critic, after a deep evening's listening to one of his half dozen plays, dithered: "Brilliant or rather silly. I couldn't decide. The programme has enough ludicrous lines to keep one listening."

Adam Benedict

Gerald McLarnon, playwright; born Clitheroe 16 April 1915; married 1958 Eileen Essell (one son); died London 16 August 1997.

Dora Maar

When I was a young and raw

student in Paris with Nadia Boulanger and Darius Milhaud, Tony Mayer, who was then the cultural attaché to the French Embassy in London, on one of his regular visits to Paris, took me down to his crumbling chateau in Ménerbes and thence to Dora Maar's house, writes James Stevens [further]

to the obituary by Michael Peppiatt, 1 August.

During the visit Maier took us, unbelievably, to her lavatory. There were some nails sticking out from the wall and round these these was a linear composition in wire made by Picasso himself whilst still stool". She had kept this, inviolate, ever since.

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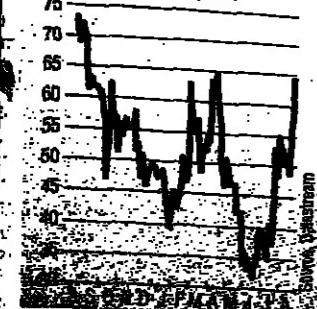
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JPM 1501

market report / shares

Data Bank	
FTSE 100	76.9
FTSE 100I	76.9
FTSE 250	29.3
FTSE 250I	29.3
FTSE 350	32.9
FTSE 350I	32.9
FTSE VOLUME	7.7M Shares
FTSE 500 bargains	1.5M
FTSE Index	76.9

VideoLogic



Black Fridays become a weekly fixture this August

Here we go again – another fraught Friday as the stock market frets about New York.

It was nearly a repeat performance of Friday of last week when Footsie crashed 125.5, its biggest point fall since the 1987 crash.

At one time yesterday the index was off 110.9. Burdened by Wall Street's overnight fall it made a weak start and drifted gently lower until taking flight when the Dow Jones Average posted a 122.4 points drop in early trading.

Then New York seemed to settle down. And Footsie meekly followed. By the close the fall had been cut to 76.9 at 4.901.1.

Again the transatlantic retreats were not linked to a significant event. In London there was a little selling which, with the market reluctant to absorb stock ahead of a holiday weekend, had a snowball effect.

The market was operating

on a skeleton workforce with the holiday season at its height. Many players did not appear, or left early, to lengthen their Bank Holiday.

And it is a time when heads of departments are often away, leaving their deputies in charge. Few number twos are prepared to bet against the herd and quickly fall into line with the general pattern of events.

So they go along with any big New York movement and when it falls blithely ignore the chance to buy what could be cheap stock.

The blizzard of interest in BT inflated volume. With the merger terms with MCI revised downwards to account for the US group's trading, BT jumped 23.5p to 436p. In two days, since it became apparent the deal could be reprinted, the shares have dialled up 52.5p of the 121p lost since the merger came under threat.

Turnover was a remarkable 180.6 million, graphically illustrating the frantic endeavours of outmanoeuvred arbitrageurs to straighten their positions. The BT/MCI affair has cost them dear.

At one time there seemed little, if any, doubt that the way the arbs should play the deal was to go long on MCI and short on BT. The trading warning and the revised terms made nonsense of such a strategy.

Since hitting a 50.1p jump

when excitement over the deal was running high dividends totalling 46.95p have been stripped from the shares.

Among blue chips hit by the Footsie collapse were Smith-

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

product of a joint Video-Logic/NEC venture. It is used to quicken and enhance a computer's display of 3D images. Matrox has 28 per cent of the market for plug-in cards which add the technology to PCs.

Rolfe & Nolan, the computer group, hardened 5p to 317.5p after placing shares at 305p with institutions to raise £1.9m. The cash is in anticipation of "signing a number of significant global contracts".

Appleyard, the garage group, reversed 10.5p to 63.5p as bid talks were called off but Brantcliffe Aggregates at last collected a bid from Enstone, improving 2.5p to 41.5p. The all-share offer has the support of the Brantcliffe board.

Enstone also placed shares conditional on the offer going ahead, at 3p to raise £2.5m.

Engineer Graysome fell 5p

to 38.5p after chairman Dick Richardson resigned. A week ago the company said bid talks had ended.

Campbell & Armstrong, the specialist supplier, duly confirmed the arrival of SAS Group Services as a 10 per cent shareholder. The shares were sold by Undervalued Assets Trust. C&A edged ahead 0.25p to 5.75p.

TBI, the property and airports group, edged ahead 1p to 89.75p. Crédit Lyonnais Lamo lifted its asset valuation to 110p. The company has acquired Sandford Airport, used by thousands of Britons visiting Florida, and is in the running to buy Bristol Airport.

Richardsons' Westgarth firms 1p to 87.5p. Stockbroker Albert E Sharp believes the shares are a buy, trading at a 50 per cent discount to the engineering sector. It sees year's profits coming out at £6.5m. Management still has 61 per cent. Institutions paid 8p against 9p, up 0.5p.

Taking Stock

By TONY HARRISON

[Reflex, which makes reflective inks, is due to make investment presentations to analysts. Its shares, 81p, have fallen from 125p last month.

A placing and open offer at 110p hit sentiment. The group raised the cash to take over Plast Chem, which has developed a polymer as a protection against corrosion. The Plast product contains a reflective element. In the trading period to February Reflex suffered a £454,000 loss but has since gained "substantial" orders. Harold Morley, chairman, said yesterday he acquired shares at 84p, lifting his stake to 9.4 per cent.

[More director selling to please institutions. Media Business said its two top directors had sold 13.5 million shares help liquidity. Management still has 61 per cent. Institutions paid 8p against 9p, up 0.5p.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (PE) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: ex rights/ex dividend ex all unlisted securities market suspended

pp partly paid pn paid shares + AM Stock

Source: FT Information

The Independent Index

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business & city

FINANCIAL JOURNAL
OF THE YEAR

Business news desk: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098
BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

BT salvages merger and saves £3.5bn

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

British Telecom yesterday salvaged its planned merger with MCI, ending weeks of mounting uncertainty, by negotiating a cut of almost £3.5bn in the purchase price for the US long-distance giant.

The talks between BT's board in London and MCI executives in the UK and US lasted until 3am yesterday morning, though both sides refused to reveal how close the companies had come to abandoning the merger, the biggest in British corporate history.

Sir Ian Vallance, BT chairman, said: "While it looked as if this partnership might not manage a rough patch of turbulence we have been going through, the fact that we have got through it was a testament to that partnership."

The deal was thrown into jeopardy after MCI's shock profit warning last month. The company predicted losses from its attack on the US phone market would double this year to \$800m (£500m).

The biggest surprise from the review was that Concert will push ahead with MCI's expansion into the \$170bn local market, though the company predicted some scope for cost savings. Timothy Price, MCI president, said speculation that the company would cut 5,000 jobs was "completely wrong".

MCI has found it much harder to break into the local phone market than it had expected. Moves by federal regulators to open the local monopoly companies to competition have become bogged down with legal challenges.

The 22 per cent cut in the merger price went much further than the 10-15 per cent predicted by most analysts and looked likely to satisfy BT's big shareholders, who were furious that the senior management had been apparently unaware of MCI's problems.

Shareholders will vote on the new terms at a second round of

extraordinary meetings by early December, delaying the completed merger by some three months to 1 January. One BT investor said: "The cynical view on the price would be that things must be very bad at MCI, but we think the new deal is good news. The credibility of BT's management has been restored."

Under the renegotiated terms, BT is paying \$18.9bn (£11.9bn) for the 80 per cent of MCI it does not own, based on yesterday's closing BT share price, a reduction of almost 22 per cent over the old deal. It values MCI at £14.8bn, down from £19.1bn.

BT's shares soared 23.5p on the news to 436p, while MCI shares, which fell 15 per cent on Thursday, were up just 1 per cent in afternoon trading.

Sir Ian insisted MCI investors were not humiliated because the rise in BT shares yesterday had boosted the total value of BT's cash and shares offer. "It could well be that it is in the interests of MCI shareholders to have a smaller share of a bigger cake."

Tim Price, MCI's president, described the reduced price as a "win-win situation" for both companies. "We are excited by this deal, we are glad to have the deal back on track and we are waiting anxiously to close."

James Ross, from stockbrokers Hoare Govett, said the terms were "pretty sensible". He continued: "Of course it wasn't desirable that it got into this situation in the first place, but they seem to be back on track."

But the prolonged uncertainty since the MCI profits warning left a trail of discontent in the US, with investors who had gambled on MCI's share price nursing huge losses. Guy Wyer-Pratte, a leading US arbitrageur, said BT had walked away with a bargain. "A lot of people, including some of the better US analysts, got the outcome completely wrong. BT directors let people speculate about the review for weeks. I find that absolutely appalling."

Comment, page 19



Agreed: Tim Price, MCI president (left), and Sir Ian Vallance, BT chairman, at yesterday's announcement of the amended deal

Photograph: PA

American investors left with smaller stake

MCI shareholders woke up yesterday to the gloomy prospect of a much reduced stake in Concert, the new merged company with BT, with speculation that some big US investors may consider taking legal action against the renegotiated terms, writes Chris Godsmark.

The revised agreement gives MCI shareholders fewer BT shares when the merger goes ahead, but more cash. Each MCI investor will now receive 3.75 BT shares, plus \$7.75 in cash, compared with the 5.4 BT

shares and \$6 in cash in the original proposals.

As a result, MCI shareholders will end up owning just a quarter of Concert, instead of the 34 per cent in last November's merger terms. To compensate for the loss, BT has agreed to pay out almost \$1bn (£560m) more in cash to MCI investors. Because of the revised share element of the revised deal, Concert will have 10 per cent fewer shares in circulation than anticipated.

But MCI shareholders were

dealt a further blow, with news that they will not now begin receiving dividends from Concert until the next financial year, starting in April 1998. Under the old deal they would have been paid the final Concert dividend for the whole of 1997/98, worth a forecast 18.5p a share, according to analysts.

The difference means BT will now pay out about £630m less in dividends this year than it would otherwise have done, more than making up for the extra cash paid out through the

revised merger terms. "Let's just say the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away," one analyst said yesterday.

BT said the merger would lead off of "modest" falls in its earnings this year and next year; knocking about £90m off profits compared to if BT had stayed independent, equivalent to 1p a share.

But analysts yesterday kept their dividend forecasts unchanged yesterday, implying a yield on Concert shares of more than 5 per cent. The company

said it still intended to deliver "double digit" dividend growth in the long term.

BT also warned that the revised deal would raise its gearing - the ratio of debt to equity - from up to 90 per cent projected under the previous terms to 120 per cent. The extra debt would come not just from losses on MCI's local phone market business but also from the £500m windfall tax bill in the UK and BT's higher pensions bill following Budget changes to tax breaks on dividends.

The main losers have been the small privately owned firms which cannot provide the necessary capital investment, but Appleyard has lost two prestigious jaguar franchises in Leeds and Harrogate and several other outlets have been closed or sold.

The statement coincided with the release of figures for six months to the end of June showing a 3 per cent drop in turnover to £380m and a 16 per cent drop in profit before tax to just £3.88m, even including an exceptional profit of £75,000 on the disposal of dealerships.

The interim dividend has been cut from 3.1p to 2p. The figures were marginally better than some analysts had expected, after last year's full year loss of £5.35m, which included a charge of £8.6m to cover the cost of restructuring and slimming down the business.

Millennium row as Saatchi wins £16m contract

Cathy Newman

The controversy surrounding the millennium celebrations intensified yesterday when the New Millennium Experience Company (NMEC), the group organising the festivities, awarded a £16m advertising account for the project to M&C Saatchi, one of whose partners has been advising the NMEC since February.

Bill Muirhead, a partner at M&C Saatchi, has been giving "strategic advice" to the NMEC.

ITV executives yesterday said that the appointment of an Independent Television Commission official to a key post at Granada Media Group could lead to a conflict of interest, writes Cathy Newman.

Virginia Lee, a senior Independent Television Commission official, has been appointed corporate affairs manager at Granada, where one of her responsibilities will be to deal with the renewal of the company's three licences.

Ms Lee has looked at licence renewal issues during her time at the Independent Television Commission.

The Independent Television Commission said that, while she would not be leaving until mid-October, she would no longer be working on licence renewal for the watchdog.

LIG gains US approval for thinner condom

Sameena Ahmad

London International Group, the world's leading condom manufacturer, is poised to secure US approval for the world's first polyurethane condom. The revolutionary new prophylactic will be much thinner, helping to improve sensitivity. The group is also developing a female condom to rival the much hated Femidom product.

Commenting on LIG's fe-

male condom, which is in the early stages of development, Bill Potter, London International's scientific director, said: "The concept of a female condom is of great interest to women. They want a safe method of birth control which is under their control. We are developing something with greater aesthetic appeal than Femidom."

Women have criticised Femidom, developed by US group, the Female Health Company,

for looking and feeling like a plastic bag.

The new male condom, called Durex Avanti, has double the tensile strength of conventional latex, but is 40 per cent thinner. "This condom is clear, doesn't result in allergies like latex and improves sensitivity. The biggest reason men give for not using latex condoms is that they feel like a Wellington boot," Mr Potter said.

Avanti, which has taken six

years to pass the US's stringent drug laws because of its unique material and cost £15m to develop, should go on sale in the US in the next few months and be rolled out in the UK in September. At present it can only be sold to people in the US with latex allergies, and cannot be advertised as an effective contraceptive.

Cleanance by the US Food and Drugs Administration is an important breakthrough for LIG.

The US condom market is worth around \$300m (£190m) a year, more than three times the size of the UK market.

Avanti will cost at least twice the price of conventional condoms in the US. Its launch in the US is an attempt by LIG to maintain its market position - Durex is number two brand in the States with a 20 per cent share, behind Carter Wallace, whose Trojan brand has 60 per cent of the US market.

Interest rate fears trigger steep falls in New York and London

Tom Stevenson
Financial Editor

Shares fell sharply on both sides of the Atlantic again yesterday on fears that US and German interest rates are about to rise.

It was the third Friday in a row increasingly jittery equity markets have tumbled.

The pound also slipped further after an unexpectedly sharp rise in German import prices suggested the Bundesbank would tighten monetary policy.

The continuation of Thursday's slide in the value of sterling also reflected a forecast from the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) earlier in the week that UK interest rates have moved high enough to restrain inflation.

Mr Muirhead had not been paid for his work since February, the spokesman added. "He was advising at board level, but had no formal contract or title," Mr Muirhead could not be contacted for comment.

Other agencies who pitched for the business included Abbott Mead Vickers and TBWA/Simon Palmer.

to fears that economic growth is too strong. London finally closed 7.6p lower at 4,901.1 but the Dow Jones index remained weak throughout the session.

Dealers said the fall was exaggerated by low trading volumes. They added that investors were trying to pre-empt any slump in New York on Monday when London will be closed for the bank holiday.

One of the few bright spots in the leading index was provided by BT, which closed 23.5p higher at 436p after it agreed to a deal with the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) earlier in the week that UK interest rates have moved high enough to restrain inflation.

Smaller companies again did better, boosted in part by the weakness of the pound and by a growing belief that the secondaries represent much better value than the leading stocks that have led the market higher so far this year. The FTSE 250 index closed 23.9 points lower at 4,658.7.

A rise in German rates as a result of higher prices would narrow the gap between the two countries' base rates, making the pound, which closed yesterday at DM2.91, relatively less attractive. German import prices surged 0.6 per cent in July and 4.2 per cent over the past year, well above analysis' forecasts of 0.2 and 3.7 per cent.

German prices were boosted in July by the strength of the dollar, which appreciated by 3.7 per cent against the mark, and by higher oil prices, which rose by 4.3 per cent on average. Together with recent comments in the Bundesbank's monthly inflation report, the data raised fears that the central bank is poised to take a more hawkish line on inflation.

Other data yesterday showed a resurgence of manufacturing

investment by British companies - in the second quarter of the year it was running 26 per cent higher than a year earlier. Economists said the increase was "steaming", showing that companies were reacting to competitive pressures and difficult trading conditions by raising investment rather than cutting it.

According to Kevin Darlington, an economist at ABN Amro House Govett, the figures showed that business investment has been much more resilient than headline figures earlier in the week implied.

The Office for National Statistics also issued motor vehicle production figures yesterday, which confirmed the patchy nature of the recovery. The seasonally adjusted total car production index fell from 126 in June to 122 in July. In the six months ending in July, production grew by 7.9 per cent against the previous six months.

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JEREMY WARNER

What is BT supposed to do? Hand all its surplus capital back to shareholders and settle down to managing the decline of its own domestic business? Few managements worth the name are going to be satisfied with such a dismal task

BT seems to have got away with it, but only just

Pew! Saved by regulators. It isn't often that Sir Iain Vallance, chairman of British Telecom, has cause to thank the watchdogs that govern his industry but on this occasion he certainly does. Rarely have investors had as close a shave as the huge overvalue BT so very nearly ended up paying for MCI of the US. But for the tardiness of the Federal Communications Commission in the US in approving the deal, the merger would have sailed through months ago on the original inflated terms.

The subsequent damage to BT shareholders, judging by yesterday's new terms, would have been £3bn to £4bn. It seems at least questionable that either Sir Iain or his chief executive Sir Peter Bonfield, could have survived such a costly and embarrassing error of judgement.

As it is, regulators took long enough in approving the deal to allow MCI's problems in its core long distance business and its assault on local telecoms markets in the US, fully to emerge into public view. How BT and its advisers failed to spot these difficulties at an earlier stage is another question. BT has owned 20 per cent of MCI for some years and is already represented on its board. If anyone had an insider's view of what was going on at MCI, it was BT.

Furthermore, James Dodd, senior tele-

coms analyst at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, and others, had spotted and aired in the City the potential for serious difficulties in local telecoms long before BT forced its American partners to put out that infamous warning.

Thankfully BT has now managed to renegotiate the terms in a way that allows honour to be satisfied all round. It was touch and go. MCI will almost certainly face a fury of litigation from the US from angry arbitrageurs and others whose fingers had been badly burnt by the turn of events. Documents filed in connection with the takeover indicated that there was no scope for renegotiating the terms. It could also reasonably be argued that the unexpected events to hit BT since the merger was announced – the windfall profits tax and the removal of tax credits on dividends – went some way to explaining the deterioration in MCI's outlook.

In the end, however, a less advantageous deal for MCI was better than no deal at all. Without the prop of the BT takeover, MCI's share price would have headed a lot further south than it already has. The latest terms finally dispense with the pretence that this is a merger of equals. MCI shareholders end up with just 25 per cent of the combined company under the new offer, against more than 34 per cent under the old. The cash ele-

ment of the bid is enhanced a little, but this does no more than compensate MCI shareholders for the BT final dividend they will now not be getting.

There will be some earnings dilution next year and the remainder of this year, BT says, but thereafter the deal should begin to wash its face. In all this, BT looks to have ended up with if not quite a bargain, certainly a rather better deal than if none of the had ever happened. The bigger question raised by the debacle, however, is whether BT should be buying MCI at all.

I've always largely gone along with BT's case for the MCI takeover but there is no doubt that MCI's difficulties have raised some very pointed questions. Does BT really need to buy another commodity telephony business to further its international ambitions? After a prolonged period of spectacular growth in the US during which MCI provided the main competitive challenge to AT&T, MCI is now finding the going much tougher. Growth rates have slowed and the long distance market in the US has become very much more price competitive.

Moreover, BT already has a highly successful joint venture with MCI in the services it is most interested in developing – one-stop telecommunications for big multinational business. Does it really need to go the whole

hog and merge with MCI further to develop this business? Of course it doesn't. BT and MCI come at these markets from really quite different perspectives. BT is the incumbent public telephone company, attempting to defend its market position against buccaneering newcomers. MCI is the very reverse. It is one of the outsiders trying to muscle in, an attacker of markets rather than a defender of them.

Sir Iain Vallance has tried to present this difference of approach and culture as a boon which will be of profound assistance to BT as it mounts its assault on Europe's newly deregulated telecommunications markets. But it could just as easily work the other way round. The two may find themselves incapable of living with each other.

Despite these doubts, this is probably still the right deal for BT to be doing. The case can be argued on a number of fronts but perhaps the most compelling is that size for the sake of it may actually count for something in these fast changing and rapidly globalising markets. What is BT supposed to do? Hand all its surplus capital back to shareholders and then simply settle down to managing the decline of its own domestic business? Few managements worth the name are going to be satisfied with such a dismal task.

Combined, BT and MCI become the third

largest telecoms company in the world. Arguably, it will also be the one with the greatest international spread. The upshot is cheaper capital and an ability to take risks and seize market opportunities in a way that neither could realistically do on their own. This has been characterised by some as a thoroughly bad thing. MCI will merely end up using BT's money to advance its own uneconomic push into local US telecoms, many are warning.

But it is not really like that. Of course some of what BT and MCI do together won't work out and there will be losses that on their own neither company would find easy to justify. Some of these more risky propositions will come good, however. On balance, the greater market power that size for its own sake gives will enhance the prospects of both companies. If this were BT buying, say, a US television network, or some such other business which is seen to be converging with telecoms, then there would obviously be room for doubt. But it is not. MCI is in the same business as BT. What's more it is a business where boundaries are fast breaking down.

Not everyone will be convinced by this. BT can still expect quite considerable shareholder opposition when the MCI takeover is put to the vote. Even so, at this juncture it looks as Sir Iain has got away with it after all.

Sky moves into pay-per-view pop

Cathy Newman

BskyB will become the first broadcaster to ask viewers to pay to watch a music concert when it screens a charity event for the victims of the Montserrat volcano next month.

News of the concert was yesterday revealed in so-called exclusive from page story in *The Sun*, the newspaper owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, the dominant shareholder in BskyB.

Sky will put its substantial marketing budget behind the venture, which will inevitably increase its commercial profile as it seeks to introduce more pay-per-view events. It will also be able to assess how many viewers are willing to pay to watch concerts.

Sky beat the BBC, ITV and

Channel 4 to the exclusive rights to screen the concert, which will feature stars such as Eric Clapton, Elton John, Paul McCartney, Sting and Mick Hucknall.

Subscribers to the satellite broadcaster will be given eight opportunities to view the event over a four-day period, at £4.95 a time.

A spokesman for Sky said that the company was confident of a "strong interest" in the

event as tickets for the live Albert Hall concert had sold out within 90 minutes of being offered for sale.

Sky started experimenting with pay-per-view broadcasts, where subscribers pay extra to view a one-off event, last March when a boxing match between Frank Bruno and Mike Tyson drew 660,000 paying viewers.

Sky would not say yesterday how much it had bid for the Montserrat rights, nor how

many viewers it hoped to pull in. All profits would be donated to theMontserrat Foundation, which is offering aid to the victims of the Soufrière Volcano, the company said.

To date, Sky has confined its pay-per-view ventures to boxing, showing five bouts over the last 18 months. However, the Montserrat concert will be the company's first foray into non-sporting events. Sky is widely expected to show films on a

pay-per-view basis at a later date.

The company has had talks with Cable & Wireless Communications about launching a joint pay-per-view service, but a deal is thought to be some way off being signed.

Harvey Goldsmith CBE, promoter of music for Montserrat, said Sky had come up with the "best opportunity" to raise the most money. He said that all terrestrial television companies, except Channel 5, had pitched for the rights. Mr Goldsmith added he was confident Sky would deliver a large audience.

Sir George Martin, formerly the Beatles' producer, owns a studio on Montserrat and is producing and organising the concert. He said the event would raise much-needed cash for the victims and would bring the disaster into the public eye.

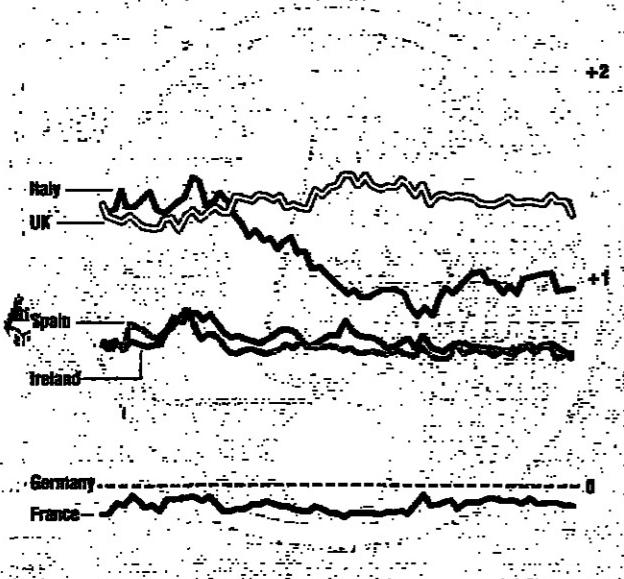


How the Sun broke the news of BSkyB's latest venture into pay-per-view TV

Who will be in EMU? The financial markets' view

The closer other countries get to the dotted baseline (Germany) the more likely they are to join EMU.

Long term interest rates



TOWARDS EMU? The line moves towards the German line it means countries no longer require such a high premium for holding that country's bonds compared to German ones, because they are considered the currency won't devalue against the Mark. In other words, they think that country will be included in a single currency with Germany in ten years' time.

AWAY FROM EMU? However, if they think the country won't be in EMU, that will have higher inflation and that there is a risk of future devaluation against the Mark, then they will demand an extra premium for holding that country's bonds, so the line will move away from the base.

When will EMU start? The City Analysts' View

The independent asked analysts from:

Nikos Europe, Palaeo Weather, ABN Amro, JP Morgan, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, Salomon Brothers, Goldman Sachs, HSBC, James Capel, UBS

what probability they placed on EMU starting on time.

Probability EMU starts on time: 65% (65% last week)
Probability EMU is delayed: 32% (22% last week)
Probability EMU never happens: 3% (3% last week)

Probability EMU starts off time: 10% (10% last week)

Probability EMU is delayed: 20% (20% last week)

Probability EMU never happens: 65% (65% last week)

Probability EMU starts off time: 10% (10% last week)

Probability EMU is delayed: 20% (20% last week)

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sport

Critical point for ailing Agassi

John Roberts reports from New York on the fall of the former world No 1 who hopes to rediscover his touch at the US Open, which starts on Monday

The actress Tallulah Bankhead apparently became so anxious watching Bill Tilden lose to Rémi Lacoste in the 1928 Wimbledon semi-finals that she ate the rose from her lapel. Entire gardens might be under threat from Brooke Shields.

You may remember Ms Shields' husband, Andre Agassi. Their wedding in California in April was his biggest match of the season.

There were rumours that Agassi was on the point of retiring, which proved premature. He had given the Australian Open a miss, explaining that he needed to rest, and was absent from the French Open and Wimbledon because of a tendon injury to his right wrist.

On returning to the court after 10 weeks, the Las Vegas performances suggested disorientation, his opening round defeats for the year extending to seven as he strove for a semblance of form ahead of the United States Open, which starts on Monday here.

Officials of the United States Tennis Association trust that the unseeded Agassi will at least put in an appearance. They have already lost Steffi Graf and Boris Becker from the cast list and Monica Seles' challenge may be debilitated by a flu virus.

The organisers are awaiting confirmation that the mayor, Rudolph Giuliani, will accept an invitation to make a speech to inaugurate the Arthur Ashe Stadium on Monday night. Giuliani has been critical of a contract signed by his tennis-loving predecessor, David Dinkins, restricting flights over Flushing Meadows from La Guardia Airport during the tournament.

While Mayor Giuliani's support would be useful, the need for a revitalised Agassi is pressing. A world ranking of No 59 might be a fair assessment of where Agassi's tennis stands, but as a personality he is still No 1, partly because of a dearth of challengers in that department.

Agged 27, Agassi bloomed

late and wilted early in terms of Grand Slam titles, winning Wimbledon in 1992, the US Open in 1994 and the Australian Open in 1995. His 11 years on the circuit, however, have been a triumph of marketing for the player and his marketing consultant, Nike.

Reportedly worth £75m, Agassi has earned £8.5m in official prize-money. A contract with Nike agreed in 1995 was reportedly for \$100m (£65m) over 10 years.

It seems doubtful that he would continue playing without the thrill of success. Causes in contracts? Agassi has been Santa Claus for his sponsors. How many male athletes have created so much interest and speculation about what they wore?

In the cause of commerce, Agassi has gone it alone, a garish gamut of "hot lava", "hot lime", "grunge" (complete with black socks and shoes), bad hair days and shaven-headed days.

Philip Agassi's brother and business adviser, has been quoted as saying, "Andre's great-great-grandchildren won't have to worry about money. Andre has more money than he could spend. He wouldn't sign long-term contracts with those companies to play, and then quit the game. Andre is still in his prime. He has a good three to five years to return to the top 10. Who knows? It could be longer. He hasn't lost his lust for the game."

But what about his form? Last month, responding to suggestions that marriage had

changed his tennis priorities, Agassi said: "The people saying that are probably the same people saying Brooke was the reason I got to No 1."

Perhaps. But aside from one or two Davis Cup performances and the dispensation of being allowed to curse his way to an Olympic gold medal in Atlanta last year, Agassi has hardly been recognisable as the same player since losing to Pete Sampras in the 1995 US Open final.

Agassi, the defending champion and No 1 in the world at the time, was defeated in four sets by Sampras, the world No 2. The outcome of one marathon rally might have changed the course of their respective careers.

Sampras had received set point on Agassi's serve in the opening set. Agassi put the ball in play, Sampras hit a return, and the players became synchronised in a breathtaking duel of angled groundstrokes. On the 22nd stroke, Sampras outmanoeuvred Agassi with a forehand and delivered a back-hand winner across the court.

It was an example, Agassi said, of Sampras's "explosiveness". It might also have been the moment when their rivalry was born.

"That one point in that match was significant," Sampras said during a break in his preparations the other day, "because at that point Andre had won 25 straight matches, and he worked so hard to get to No 1 in the world. To come up short at the US Open, the most important tournament we have in

the States, I'm sure was very tough to get over."

He showed glimpses of his form there, but he hasn't been as consistent as I think he should be. So it's something maybe he hasn't quite rebounded from. It's something that I'm sure he's thought about and whatever. But I'm sure he's put it behind him. He's had a tough summer. I'm sure at the US Open time

he'll be ready. His confidence might not quite be where it was a couple of years ago, but with a couple of matches under his belt he'll be tough to beat.

We shall see. After losing recently to his compatriot Justin Gimelstob, Agassi said: "It will take a while to get that confidence back, to prove to myself I can beat these guys day in and day out again. It's just a grind."

One wonders how many shots Gilbert, now Agassi's coach, puts past the Las Vegas

on the practice court.

You've got to pay the price and do it. I certainly am committed to that challenge and I will do it."

John McEnroe was about to be 27 when he decided to take a seven-month sabbatical. He never quite reproduced his previous level of performance. The New Yorker interrupted his career for marriage to the actress Tatou O'Neal and fatherhood after losing in the first round of the Masters in January 1986.

That defeat, 6-1 in the third set, was by the Californian Brad Gilbert, who had won only one set in their seven previous matches.

"When I start losing to the Brad Gilberts of this world," McEnroe said, "I've got to reconsider what I'm doing even playing this game."

One wonders how many shots Gilbert, now Agassi's coach, puts past the Las Vegas

on the practice court.

It is a huge sport, with a huge audience, and it is all about money. The reason racing drivers are trying to earn a lot of money is because they bring results, success and publicity to the teams they drive for. Nobody would be offering me money if I was no good.

"It's not about the risks we take, it's because of our huge commercial value. Sponsors want to be associated with Michael Schumacher and Damon Hill."

Hill, in common with other drivers, believes his salary – currently \$7m – should be a measure of his standing in the sport.

"It's not right to expect me to just roll over with my legs in the air and forget the things I have

worked for in my career," he said. "I would be betraying all the work and my own value that I perceive I have in the sport."

He backed up that claim by declaring that he had rejected a two-year deal – believed to have come from Sauber – of more than \$20m (£12.7m), yet insisted that he deserves to be paid what he deems is worth.

"I turned down in excess of \$20m over two years. The reason those deals have been put to me is because of my ability and achievements in the sport, and what I can do for a racing team," Hill said.

The problem for Hill is that although he has received substantial offers, none has been from a competitive team.

Coulthard and Hakkinen, on the other hand, are now sure of a drive next season.

"This is one of the most desirable seats you can get in Formula One – and I'm glad I have it," the 26-year-old Coulthard said. "I have done a good solid job this year. I have always believed I would be at McLaren, I never doubted it for one moment."

BELGIAN GRAND PRIX (Spa-Francorchamps): Champ: David Coulthard (McLaren-Mercedes). 2nd: Mika Hakkinen (Williams-Renault). 3rd: Jarno Trulli (Jordan-Mugen-Honda). 4th: Eddie Irvine (Ferrari). 5th: Mika Salo (Sauber-Petronas). 6th: Jenson Button (McLaren-Mercedes). 7th: J J Harriton (GBR) (Sauber-Petronas). 8th: Mika Häkkinen (McLaren-Mercedes). 9th: Mika Salo (Sauber-Petronas). 10th: Mika Häkkinen (McLaren-Mercedes). 11th: Jarno Trulli (Jordan-Mugen-Honda). 12th: Eddie Irvine (Ferrari). 13th: Mika Häkkinen (McLaren-Mercedes). 14th: Jarno Trulli (Jordan-Mugen-Honda). 15th: Mika Häkkinen (McLaren-Mercedes). 16th: Eddie Irvine (Ferrari). 17th: Mika Häkkinen (McLaren-Mercedes). 18th: Eddie Irvine (Ferrari). 19th: Mika Häkkinen (McLaren-Mercedes). 20th: Eddie Irvine (Ferrari). 21st: Mika Häkkinen (McLaren-Mercedes). 22nd: Eddie Irvine (Ferrari). 23rd: Eddie Irvine (Ferrari). 24th: Eddie Irvine (Ferrari). 25th: Eddie Irvine (Ferrari). 26th: Eddie Irvine (Ferrari). 27th: Eddie Irvine 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Pentad to whet Dettori's appetite

Racing

GREG WOOD

After three days at York, and in particular a Nunthorpe Stakes which provided enough drama for an entire month of meetings, it is hardly surprising that decent horses are thin on the ground at Goodwood today.

Just four will go to post for the Celebration Mile, forcing those who prefer quality to pin-sticks in big fields of handicappers to look abroad for an interest, notably in the Prix Morny, one of France's most significant juvenile events, at Deauville tomorrow. Allied Forces meanwhile, will represent the British-based end of the Godolphin organisation in the Arlington Million in Chicago, with Frankie Dettori in the saddle.

It will be a busy weekend for the Italian, who has in his trip to the United States while also attempting to haul himself past Kieren Fallon in the race for the jockeys' championship. The

head-to-head between the two – Pat Eddery, the third challenger, is riding in France – will be an added attraction for the Sussex crowd. Only Dettori has a ride in the Celebration Mile, however, in which he and Cape Cross must try to overcome a white-hot favourite in Among Men.

Among Men was beaten for the first time in his four-race career over this course and distance last time, but as the event in question was the Sussex Stakes his performance hardly counts as a desperate failure for one with no previous experience at Group One level.

But only the foolhardy will stride into Goodwood's betting ring to have a lumpy bet on the favourite since Michael Stoute's runner did not appear entirely at home on the down-and-up gradients that day.

Asirakat, by Danzig out of

In terms of prestige, the main supporting race is the March Stakes, which in theory at least is a St Leger trial. Thanks to the BBC, punters now have a new theory as to how it acquired its name: you will have to march down to the local betting shop if you want to see it live. Quite why the broadcasters are unable to cover a race at 2.15 on Saturday afternoon – they manage to do so, after all, most weekends of the year – is anyone's guess, not

least when it is sponsored by another arm of their organisation, Radio Five.

This year the loss is tolerable with another small field – and only two, Palio Sky and Book At Bedtime, are entered in the Doncaster Classic. Any of the five runners could conceivably win, but Pasted (2.15) should get Dettori's day off to an ideal start.

More interesting for backers are the two televised handicaps, and here the honours may be shared between Fallon and Det-

tori. Dancing Image will surely start favourite for the Crown Stakes Handicap, and deserves to do so after a smooth run over course and distance three weeks ago.

However, that contest was not a handicap and today's opposition looks far more demanding. In particular KING OF PERU (map 2.45), another with excellent winning form at the track, will offer value after an excellent run in the Stewards' Cup. He should do even better today with an extra furlong to travel, and another who can run in the same race, Faraway Lass (next best 3.15), appears to have the sprint handicap at her mercy.

Dettori might have expected to partner Desert Prince, the sole British-trained runner in tomorrow's St Leger trial, if he was not going to be in America. Instead, it is Fallon who will attempt to give David Loder his second successive win in the Group One race, a mission in which he may well succeed given

en Desert Prince's excellent second place in the Coventry Stakes at Royal Ascot.

Herramienta (John Reid) will represent Aidan O'Brien in the same race, but the favourite will surely be Andre Fabre's Xaar.

Classic Cliche, Chief Contender, Orchestra Stall and Persian

will also be present from the start.

3.15. High-drawn runners frequently have an edge in big-field sprinters here, though that was not the case in the Stewards' Cup here three weeks ago. On their good runs in that event, Faraway Lass and Oggi have very strong claims here and look best of the low numbers. There will be plenty of pace on the

GOODWOOD

2.45: RESTRICTURE has been slow this season to reacquire the smart form he showed as a four-year-old, but indicated a return to his best was imminent when second, only a neck behind Decorated Hero, over 7f at Newbury last time. This is the minimum trip for Julie Cecil's runner but he is handily drawn for Michael Roberts to be prominent from the start.

3.15: Book At Bedtime frequently has an edge in big-field sprinters here, though that was not the case in the Stewards' Cup here three weeks ago. On their good runs in that event, Faraway Lass and Oggi have very strong claims here and look best of the low numbers. There will be plenty of pace on the

HYPERION'S TV TIPS

sport

RUGBY UNION: New season set to be the most competitive and compelling yet as the senior clubs get down to business

Invasion of the entertainers

CHRIS HEWETT
Rugby Union Correspondent

It may sound an awful lot of money to those of us condemned to earning a crust in the real world, but £1.2m no longer breaks the bank in the wild and wacky never-never land of sporting make-believe. At current exchange rates that sort of investment might buy you four-fifths of Alan Shearer or one of the wing mirrors on Michael Schumacher's Ferrari, so someone at Allied Dunbar has closed a very sweet deal indeed in purchasing the top end of English club rugby at a bargain price.

The inaugural Allied Dunbar Premiership campaign escapes from the traps in Bath, Gloucester, Northampton and Richmond this afternoon and for all the legitimate concerns over reckless foreign recruitment, unsustainable wage bills and a ridiculously top-heavy fixture list for the leading players, the new sponsors will get more than their money's worth this season. Quite simply, this latest manifestation of England's leading domestic competition will be the most compelling and competitive yet.

Those unreconstructed Rugby Union blazers who remain deeply suspicious of the senior clubs' whole-hearted embracement of professionalism – and yes, that particular dinosaur still exists – may prefer not to hear it, but the credit for what is about to unfold lies wholly with the Premiership participants who manufactured a silk purse from a sow's ear last season and are confident of cranking up the entertainment value still further now they are operating from

a more stable financial base. Only Bristol, denuded by the departures of three internationals forwards, have yet to attract multi-million pound investments and latest indications from the newly refurbished Memorial Ground suggest that situation may change any day. London Irish, the other top-flight side with one foot in the debtor's prison, are buying their way out of trouble through a business consortium funded fund-raising operation that has already generated around £24,000 and continues to bear fruit at a spectacular rate.

As a result of all this new-found wealth, the Premiership is positively dripping with quality. Much of it is non-English, of course, and there is little doubt that a number of clubs are guilty of offering draft salary packages in an effort to bolster their squads, yet the fact remains that the average top-flight side can now parade more than a dozen full internationals before the paying public.

The promoted polyglots of Richmond, for instance, feel able to confine three full caps – Matthew Pini of Australia, Earl Va'a of Western Samoa and John Davies of Wales – to the replacements' bench when the re-placements' bench are neighbours London Irish at the Athletic Ground this afternoon. Likewise, Bath can field nine Test players against Newcastle at The Rec in April. Frighteningly, Gloucester played pretty well that night.

And Leicester? They will be ruggedly strong as usual, but the Welford Road faithful may find themselves transferring their myopic allegiance from Martin Johnson, Neil Back and their fellow artisans in the ABC club to a genuine fleet-footed, nimble-fingered artiste in the shape of Wasialei Serevi. The wondrous Fijian may, of course, die of exposure in the cold and wet of an east Midlands winter but if he is still breathing come the spring, he will surely give us something to cherish.

Wasps, whose scheduled

opener against Serevi's Tigers has been postponed to accommodate the Notting Hill Carnival, are also certain to feature strongly, but, then, it is possible to make out persuasive top-four cases for at least nine of the dozen élite participants. One positive by-product of what has quickly become known as English rugby's "foreign invasion" is the uncertainty it brings in its wake. The big-money imports may all flop together, but it is more likely than some will light the blue touchpaper and set the Premiership alight à la Bergkamp, Zola and Juninho.

A salivating prospect, then. And we still have the Heineken Cup, the Five Nations and an All Blacks tour on the back-burner. As a result, there have some sort of back division to go with the bone-crunching pack. Significant arrivals: Philippe Saint-Andre, Raphael Iona, Michael Young (Ottawa), Kieran Read (Bath), John Wallford (Cardiff).

Significant arrivals: Leon Everitt (Llanelli), Mark Jenkins (Cardiff), Russell Easton (Leicester), David Rees (Cardiff). Four newcoaches: Ian Sanders (Gloucester), Graham Dave (Sale), Neil McCarthy (Leicester), Craig Barlow (Exeter). Prediction: Obvious the candidates.

Five culture shocks for the new season

1 Sins. No one seems to know quite how the system will be used, but it's there anyway.

2 Ten-minute half-times. Nothing to do with television demands, apparently, but at least the players will now be able to eat a whole orange rather than a single segment.

3 Sunday internationals. Sacrifile, but true nevertheless. Two Five Nations matches, Scotland v England on 22 March and Wales v France on 5 April, will be played on a Sunday. Perhaps England should ask France to play in August, when all the tricolores will be on holiday.

5 Wales at Wembley. Even stronger, in many ways. The Red Dragon will be breathing fire over the twin towers when Scotland and France make their biennial Five Nations trek in the new year. Still, the Welsh could hardly be less successful in London than they have been in Cardiff, could they?

4 England at Old Trafford. The familiar cry of "Come On You Reds" may well be replaced by "Come on You Red Faces", owing to the fact that England are venturing into unfamiliar territory to play the All Blacks in Manchester on 22 November. Why, for heaven's sake? It's hard enough squaring up to Sean Fitzpatrick on home turf.

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Prediction: Obvious the candidates.

BATH
Coaches: Andy Robinson, Clive Woodward.
Captain: Andy Nicol
From the old art to a right old state in the space of a season, and on paper at least, the professionals have something to prove after a shambolic campaign last term. They look mighty dangerous outside, especially with a class finisher on the bench in the form of young Matt Perry. Could set The Rec alight in any number of back-line positions. Are they good enough up front, though? In truth, it's a mean streak at the sharp end, they'll take some stopping.

Significant arrivals: Leon Everitt (Llanelli), Mark Jenkins (Cardiff), Russell Easton (Leicester), David Rees (Cardiff).

Four newcoaches: Ian Sanders (Gloucester), Graham Dave (Sale), Neil McCarthy (Leicester), Craig Barlow (Exeter).

Prediction: Thank you and good night.

BRISTOL
Director of rugby: Alan Davies.

Captain: Robert Jones. On de Bruijn's regular rotation with relegation to develop into something more meaningful thanks to another rate of high-profile departures. His brother, Raphael, has pitched up from France. Richie Tombs has flown in from Sydney and Terry Sanderson has returned from South Africa. As a result, there have some sort of back division to go with the bone-crunching pack.

Significant arrivals: Philippe Saint-Andre, Raphael Iona, Michael Young (Ottawa), Kieran Read (Bath), John Wallford (Cardiff).

Four newcoaches: Ralph Cudmore (Coventry), Mark Talton (Nottingham), Richard Smith (Sale), Mark Regan (Bath).

Prediction: Obvious the candidates.

GLoucester
Director of coaching: Richard Hill.

Captain: Keith Wood. The great English parochials have finally accepted that there is a big wide world beyond the Cotswolds and the River Severn. And he and his brother, Raphael, have pitched up from France. Richie Tombs has flown in from Sydney and Terry Sanderson has returned from South Africa. As a result,

there have some sort of back division to go with the bone-crunching pack.

Significant arrivals: Philippe Saint-Andre, Raphael Iona, Michael Young (Ottawa), Kieran Read (Bath), John Wallford (Cardiff).

Four newcoaches: Ian Sanders (Gloucester), Graham Dave (Sale), Neil McCarthy (Leicester), Craig Barlow (Exeter).

Prediction: Obvious the candidates.

LEICESTER
Director of coaching: Bob Dwyer.

Captain: Martin Johnson.

The odd strength in depth, with newcomers Serevi, Vunibake, Van Hasen and Corry all in the international picture, has given the team a new lease of life.

He also has clear class in most positions – Quins will be quick out wide, strong in the middle, serviceable at fly-half and, if he can't convert that fly-half front-rowers are sharp as they might be. They do not, however, look consistent enough to create a winning culture. Who's the cut-out champion? Easy chance.

Significant arrivals: Rob Hitchin (Ottawa), Terry Sanderson (Sale), Neil McCarthy (Bath), Andrew Gibbs (Northumbria), Niall Hogan (Cardiff).

Four newcoaches: Ian Sanders (Gloucester), Graham Dave (Sale), Neil McCarthy (Leicester), Craig Barlow (Exeter).

Prediction: Top six, maybe not top four.

LONDON IRISH
Director of rugby: Willie Anderson.

Captain: Connor O'Shea.

The odd test: Sir John

McLennan's men are

the king force behind New-

castle's promotion and the

team's first ever

top-four challenge.

Significant arrivals: Matt

Reid (Cardiff), Terry

Sanderson (Sale),

John Williams (Cardiff).

Four newcoaches: Ian

Sanders (Gloucester),

Graham Dave (Sale),

Neil McCarthy (Leicester),

Craig Barlow (Exeter).

Prediction: Top six, maybe not top four.

NEWCASTLE
Director of rugby: Rob Andrew.

Captain: Dean Ryan.

The odd test: Sir John

McLennan's men are

the king force behind New-

castle's promotion and the

team's first ever

top-four challenge.

Significant arrivals: Matt

Reid (Cardiff), Terry

Sanderson (Sale),

John Williams (Cardiff).

Four newcoaches: Ian

Sanders (Gloucester),

Graham Dave (Sale),

Neil McCarthy (Leicester),

Craig Barlow (Exeter).

Prediction: Top six, maybe not top four.

NORTHAMPTON
Director of rugby: Ian King.

Captain: Mike McGehee.

The odd test: Ben Cade.

Willie Wallace, Rob

McGhee, Matt Garside, Matt

Reid, Steve Thompson, Matt

Reid, Matt Williams, Matt

Williams, Matt Williams,

Mike Williams, Matt Williams,



The view from an air balloon above The Oval yesterday as England played Australia on the second day of the sixth and final Test match

Hick and Moody give Worcestershire control

Cricket

MIKE CAREY
reports from Edgbaston
Warwickshire 252 and 8-1
Worcestershire 448

Worcestershire have surprised a few people, maybe including themselves, by their surge up the Championship table, but they are not half bad at accepting the main chance. Helped by another fielding lapse, they ground out a very handy lead yesterday to bat Warwickshire out of the game.

It was gritty, old fashioned stuff, as befit a contest that many say makes the Roses match seem like a Vicarage tea party on comparison. Warwickshire will now find themselves under pressure on their own variable pitch, especially if the suggestions of wear and tear become reality.

After their misadventures in the field the previous day when, incidentally, television pictures suggested that Nick Knight had taken a perfectly legitimate catch when Graeme Hick had made 10, Warwickshire could have done without dropping

another slip catch as early as the sixth over.

Richard Illingworth, previously missed at 11 and 23, escaped again at 81 when Graeme Welch put him down off Dougie Brown. Warwickshire were thus condemned to going through the pre-lunch session for the second successive day without getting the same pair of batsmen out, which must be some kind of macabre record.

With Hick quietly picking off, anything wayward at the other end, all was sublime in Worcestershire's world until, with Illingworth on 99, the game became anaesthetised for seven overs until he obtained the single needed for his fourth-class hundred, three of them made as nightwatchman. His job done, he was caught behind off Ashley Giles after facing 273 balls.

Hick reached his fifth century of the season with rather more panache, driving Neil Smith for a straight six. He had turned to acknowledge the applause from the dressing-room before the ball crossed the boundary rope. When he got out, after 250 balls, from a stroke that owed

as much to luck as skill, he completed the signing of Cornwall's 18-year-old left-handed batsman, Ryan Driver.

Even at the end Yorkshire's frustrations continued as Mark Robinson, one of the game's most notorious rabbits, contributed 18 lifting Sussex to 137.

Although Yorkshire's target of 13 was no more than a formality they lost Anthony McGrath in the first over when he was caught behind off Alex Edwards.

The Worcestershire pair, Graeme Hick and Richard Illingworth, struck centuries against Warwickshire to put their side in a commanding position at Edgbaston.

After starting his innings as nightwatchman on Wednesday, Illingworth went on to score 112 before being trapped by Ashley Giles, who also claimed the wicket of Hick (12).

Kent's Graham Cowdry and Mark Ealham scored resolute centuries against Somerset at Taunton while Derbyshire's Kim Barnett and Adrian Rollins also reached three figures to help their side recover from losing a wicket in the first over of the morning at Grace Road.

After James Ormond snappied up the wicket of Chris Adams, Barnett and Rollins took control.

Robinson and Astle halt Essex

JON CULLEY

reports from Worksop
Essex 440-7 dec and 10-1
Nottinghamshire 351-3 dec

This may be the match that rules Essex out of the Championship picture. Although they have a fixture in hand on some of the other contenders, only a win will keep them in realistic contention and that seems unlikely now.

After centuries by Tim Robinson and Nathan Astle, Nottinghamshire declared 89 behind yesterday evening, obliging Essex, who had extended their lead to 99 for the loss of one wicket by the close, to come up with a suitable challenge today. Recent history suggests that spinners do well on the last day here, but Peter Such will need more help from the pitch than he obtained yesterday if he is to be Essex's match-winner.

Such swapped one end for the other repeatedly the hope of finding encouragement, but a slow surface remained unresponsive. The England off-spinner was among eight bowlers employed by Essex, none of whom was able to disrupt the serene progress made by Robinson and Astle during a partnership worth 193 runs in 49 overs.

After a year of frustration, interrupted by a broken hand, Robinson was in solidly good order in making his first hundred of the summer and remained unbeaten for almost six hours for his 143, hitting 19 boundaries.

Typically, the innings had some turgid passages, but the former captain entered into the spirit of things when the current skipper, Paul Johnson, emerged at two down to smash 41 off 40 balls. They added 97 in 17 overs before Johnson holed out to long on and was Essex's match-winner.

Worcestershire have already completed the signing of Cornwall's 18-year-old left-handed batsman, Ryan Driver.

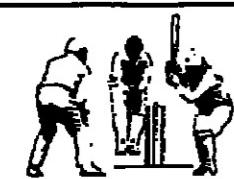
Easy for Yorkshire

ROUND UP

20

The number of brands of cigar on sale at golf's US PGA last weekend as a craze sweeps the US for on-course smoking. Larry Laurenti, of the Senior Tour, smokes a round, and has a sponsorship deal that gives him 4,000 a year. The Cigar Smoking Golfers Association's motto is 'Cigars and Golf. They're Not a Habit. They're a Lifestyle.'

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Collected by Paul Roberts at the US PGA, a product of WFL Ltd.

CRICKET SCOREBOARD

Britannic Assurance County Championship

Third day of four: 11.0 today

Durham v Middlesex

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE - First Innings (70) with all remaining wickets dismissed and 120 runs ahead of Middlesex (6).

Durham won toss

DURHAM - First Innings (Dawn) (Match for 1st place)

J. Astle c Johnson b Johnson

J. Astle b Fraser

S. J. E. Brown b Fraser

A. M. Johnson not out

Brown 104, 105, 106, 107, 108

Total (65.3 overs)

243

DURHAM - Second Innings (Dawn) (Match for 1st place)

N. Astle c Johnson b Johnson

J. Astle b Johnson

sport

Wright a model for modern striker

Ian Wright needs two goals to eclipse Cliff Bastin's 58-year scoring record for Arsenal. Glenn Moore looks at the art of scoring and the Gunners striker's place in the pantheon of hit men

The goalscorer of the week, Germany's Oliver Bierhoff, said after his five-minute hat-trick against Northern Ireland that his art was simply a case of "closing your eyes and whacking that ball".

Jürgen Klinsmann took a more considered line. "Goalscoring has to be within you, but, while it is a natural talent, it has to be developed and nourished with a lot of work."

Ian Wright, who hopes to overtake Cliff Bastin's 58-year-old Arsenal goalscoring record at Southampton today, is inclined towards the latter view. Always a natural goalscorer, even while playing amateur football in south-east London, he has refined his skill as a professional, learning much from partners like Mark Bright, Alan Smith and Dennis Bergkamp.

Goalscorers are the glory boys, the ones with the highest transfer fees, highest wages and highest profiles. Team-mates may sometimes resent this but they know they cannot do without them. Ronnie Moore, newly installed at Rotherham, echoed the lament of managers everywhere when he said on the season's eve, "we could do with a 20-goal-a-season striker."

There are not many about. In England only eight players have scored 20 goals in each of the last two seasons: Wright, Alan Shearer, Les Ferdinand, Robbie Fowler, Dwight Yorke, John Aldridge, Shaun Goater and Kyle Lightbourne. Look back four seasons and all but Shearer, Wright and Aldridge have dropped out. Only Wright has scored 20 goals in each of the last seven seasons.

Wright's obvious physical



Photographs: Ian Wright (Allsport); Cliff Bastin (Julian Getty)

quality is his pace, others, like Ferdinand, have great heading ability while Ronaldo has supreme ball control. Some, like Aldridge, have none of those aspects in abundance but are gifted at simply being in the right place at the right time. "It's all about movement in the box, getting away from your marker," he said, adding: "It's a matter of instinct."

Consistent goalscorers are cool finishers with a range of executions. They are usually mentally and physically strong and brave with plenty of confidence.

They are also, admits Wright, selfish. In his recent autobiography, Wright owned up to the

greediness required. "I have never seen a top striker who has not had the selfish streak in him," he wrote. "Anybody who plays up front and says they're happy to see the team win even if they don't score is a liar. Sometimes you say that because you don't want them not to want a big-headed image but deep in your heart you know it's rubbish. I'm desperate for goals; they're what my job is all about, and if I'm not scoring – even if the team is winning – I suck."

This is a lot more believable than Shearer's refrain, "as long as the team wins I don't care who scores" but it does create problems. Smith, Wright's first-part-

ner at Highbury, said this week: "It isn't easy for partners to develop a two-way relationship since whenever he gets the ball near goal only white posts, not team-mates, come into focus."

It is hard to argue with this approach when you consider his record. With 177 goals for Arsenal (after 117 for Crystal Palace) in all competitions, Wright is one short of Bastin's total, set in 1939, and way ahead on strike-rate. This might be expected since Bastin was a winger but, of all Arsenal's established forwards, only Ted Drake scored his goals more quickly. Drake scored 139 goals at one every 1.32 games,

Wright's Arsenal goals have come in 1927-28, even lost a testimonial from a tender's boot and Brian Clough's career was finished by cruciate ligament injury similar to those Shearer and Paul Gascoigne have recovered from. "I accept the game is quicker now but it was bloody hard physically when I was a centre-forward, Clough said a couple of years ago. "You'd get whacked from behind and never get a free-kick."

Such is Clough's reputation as a manager it is often overlooked that he has the best post-war goal ratio of any striker. Playing for Middlesbrough and Sunderland mainly in the old

60 League goals in 1927-28, even lost a testimonial from a tender's boot and Brian Clough's career was finished by cruciate ligament injury similar to those Shearer and Paul Gascoigne have recovered from. "I accept the game is quicker now but it was bloody hard physically when I was a centre-forward, Clough said a couple of years ago. "You'd get whacked from behind and never get a free-kick."

On the other hand the game was more physical and medical knowledge less advanced. Dixie Dean, who scored a record

Second Division he scored 267 goals in 296 games, a strike-rate of 0.9 (a goal every 1.1 games).

Unsurprisingly, he was very single-minded. At Middlesbrough his manager, Bob Denison, told him "there has been a complaint from one of the lads that you yell 'give it to me' every time he gets the ball, even when they are not scoring they may as well accept the glory when they do. As Klinsmann, 11 and half hours without an international goal, reflected this week: "People expect goals from me but forwards need help from others, in some games I have not had one chance."

one every two games and Gary Lineker was only marginally better.

Those figures make Wright's record with Arsenal even more impressive, but while he accepts his team-mates have also played a big part they are not getting much of a mention. However, as forwards get the blame when they are not scoring they may as well accept the glory when they do. As Klinsmann, 11 and half hours without an international goal, reflected this week: "People expect goals from me but forwards need help from others, in some games I have not had one chance."

Wing wonder Bastin converted master tactics into goals

When Cliff Bastin died, aged 79, in 1991, obituaries touched on the key role he had in the application of an innovative strategy that established Arsenal at the forefront of English football.

It must be difficult for supporters today to imagine a method that required wingers to figure regularly on the score sheet, but in the 1932-33 season alone Bastin and Joe Hulme got 53 of 118 goals that brought Arsenal the second of five championships in eight seasons.

Devised by one of the game's great thinkers, Herbert Chapman, who became manager in 1925 after leading Huddersfield to three successive championships, Arsenal's style proved almost unstoppable. Credit-

ed with introducing the "stopper" centre-half, Chapman built on his theory that a team can see too much of the ball. Arsenal sucked in the opposition and then launched devastating counter-attacks.

The master-stroke in this was Chapman's conversion of Alex James from the dribbling inside-forward he had at Preston to an artful midfield provider for Arsenal's raiders. Nobody benefited more from the Scottish international's quick thinking than Bastin, who was only 16 when Arsenal spotted him playing for Exeter City at Watford.

The journalist and broadcaster George Allison, who became Arsenal's manager on Chapman's death in 1934, was a director when Bastin

first came to the club's attention. In an autobiography, published in 1948, Allison wrote: "The day Herbert Chapman and I set out for Watford [to watch a Watford player] was one of the luckiest days in Arsenal's history... our attention began to be riveted by one of the Exeter players. He was a pink-cheeked, fair-haired, stockily built youngster, whose appearance suggested that he should have been playing in a school team rather than with seasoned professionals. We had heard whispers of him before, but in football one hears many whispers concerning boy wonders, and we had not then given him serious thought. Now, after 20 minutes, he was the one player on the field in whom we had any

interest. Our one thought was: How can we get this lad for Arsenal?"

His mind made up, Chapman spoke to Exeter about Bastin immediately the game was over. It was agreed that he would join Arsenal for £2,000 on his 17th birthday, the minimum age for a boy turning professionals. The transfer was completed in 1929 and by his 21st birthday Bastin had won all the honours then available: championship and FA Cup-winners medals and, in

1932, the first of 21 England caps. Probably, as a boy, I saw Bastin turn out in war-time football, but I don't remember anything about him. However, one summer during that time I spent a holiday on a farm in Essex, close to Shoeburyness where James was stationed in the Royal Artillery. He came frequently to the farm and sometimes people about the place persuaded him to speak about football. One of the things I remember him telling them was that Bastin suffered from deafness. Another was that Arsenal's system meant that Bastin did not have what was known in those days as a partner: no inside-left, because James operated from a deep position. Because there is no visual evidence

and the players involved are long gone, we are left to imagine how Arsenal's attacks in the early and mid-1930s were built and carried out. Bastin and Hulme wide, Jack Lambert, later replaced by Ted Drake, a force through the middle; James deep, the other inside-forward – to be ahead with David Jack, then Ray Bowden – an attacking auxiliary.

Leaving Bastin without support on his side of the field might have caused problems for other teams but for Arsenal it was encouragement to expand their attacking options. Many of their goals resulted from two passes, James to Hulme and a centre-in to Bastin. The tough Yorkshire miner Will Copping, recruited from Leeds to stiffen Arsenal's midfield,

spoke of James hitting long diagonal passes that Bastin would collect at speed when coming across the front of opposing right-backs. "Alex often didn't try to pass inside the full-back, over his head or to Cliff's feet. He'd drive the ball straight at him. An unexpected move it made Cliff very difficult to mark and brought him many goals. He had a tremendous shot and could be relied on to hit the target."

Bastin's marvellous career was foreshortened by worsening deafness and knee injuries. He retired with that record of 178 Arsenal goals Ian Wright is close to overtaking. There is no other comparison between them. Bastin was not the last of the goalscoring wingers but by all accounts there were none better.

FANS' EYE-VIEW

No 220

by James Eastham

Bernard Tapie at Marseilles.

For me, Tapie was the king. This quick-talking, money-spinning entrepreneur built the finest team in French football history – remember Wadie, Paix, Abedi Pele? – which twice destroyed the mighty Milan and captured the imagination of a notoriously fickle public. Le Midi went mad and Big Bardet was on his way to world domination.

But it was soon all over. We watched in shock as the Marseilles bubble burst and out spewed the horrifying truth: a 1990s bribery scandal which revealed corruption on a vast scale. Tapie was rotten to the core, a tricheur par excellence who left a hollow, shameful feeling in the heart of all his worshippers – but hey, what a cracking ride we had following his bogus dream.

Gone now are the days of wild, wad-waving antics: all financial matters are controlled by an independent body in order to avoid the debt-ridden days of torture suffered in recent seasons. Not a bad idea, actually – might we see the nouveau riche Premiership boys adopt a similar scheme soon? In fact, the French are full of

good ideas. They invented all the major competitions – the World Cup, the European Championship, the European Cup – and saw the value of investing good money and quality coaching in youth policies decades before their British neighbours.

Nantes alone, for example, have bred world-class stars like Deschamps, Desailly, Karembeu and Loko while Auxerre gave the world Basile Boli and Eric Cantona (and the coach is a bit of a nutter, too).

And when it comes to foreign imports, French clubs have always made the most of their colonial ties by recruiting raw talent from Africa. Excessive fees for Serie A cast-offs is not part of the French way: uncovering treasures like George Weah and Japeth N'Doram is much more their style.

All eyes shall turn towards France next summer when they stage the World Cup extravaganza. The stadiums have been beautifully renovated and are ready to welcome the people of the world – but can France win the tournament for the first time? The national coach, Aimé Jacquet, is under heavy pressure to create a classy team capable of competing with Brazil, Italy and the rest – but let's be honest, it doesn't really matter. Just give us a few nifty tricks and flicks and we'll be happy. After all, why change the habits of a lifetime?

MAJOR WEEKEND FOOTBALL FIXTURES AND POOLS CHECK

TODAY

5.00 unless stated

FA Carling Premiership

Sheffield United	W 0	D 1	L 0
West Ham	W 2	D 0	L 3
Leicester	W 2	D 0	L 3
Arsenal	W 1	D 0	L 2
Bolton	W 1	D 0	L 2
Brentford	W 1	D 0	L 2
Crystal Palace	W 1	D 0	L 2
Coventry	W 1	D 0	L 2
Derby	W 1	D 0	L 2
Everton	W 1	D 0	L 2
Southampton	W 0	D 2	L 0
Sheffield Wednesday	W 0	D 2	L 0
Watford	W 0	D 2	L 0
West Bromwich Albion	W 0	D 2	L 0
Wimbledon	W 0	D 2	L 0

Second Division

Rotherham	v	Hartlepool
Blackpool	v	Wycombe
Bristol Rovers	v	Carlisle
Cheltenham	v	Preston
Coventry	v	Portsmouth
Fulham	v	Luton
Grimsby	v	Wrexham
Leeds	v	Southampton
Nottingham Forest	v	Stoke
Oldham	v	Bournemouth
Southend	v	Bury
Sunderland	v	Walsall
Swindon	v	Grimsby
Wigan	v	Plymouth

Third Division

Bedford	v	Dunfermline
Colchester	v	Portsmouth
Dundee	v	Alloa
Exeter	v	Wrexham
Gillingham	v	Lincoln
Gateshead	v	Dundee
Grimsby	v	Colchester
Hartlepool	v	Walsall
Harrow	v	Welling
Hatton	v	Woking
Hornchurch	v	Weymouth
Ilkeston	v	Widnes
Leigh	v	Witton
Morecambe	v	Wrexham
Newport	v	Wokingham
North Ferriby	v	Witton
Oldham	v	Wokingham
Shoreham	v	Witton
Stamford	v	Wokingham
Stoke	v	Witton
Tiptree	v	Wokingham
Whitstable	v	Witton

FA Carling Premiership

Sheffield United	v	Watford
West Ham	v	Leeds
Leicester	v	Southampton
Arsenal	v	Wimbledon
Bolton	v	Wigan
Brentford	v	Southend
Crystal Palace	v	Wolverhampton
Coventry	v	Nottingham Forest
Derby	v	Southampton
Everton	v	Southend
Southampton	v	Wolverhampton
Sheffield Wednesday	v	Southend
Watford	v	Southend
West Bromwich Albion	v	Southend
Wimbledon	v	Southend
Wigan	v	Southend
Wolverhampton	v	Southend
Wolves	v	Southend

Nationwide Football League

First Division	v	Second Division
22	v	23
23	v	22
24	v	21
25	v	20
26	v	19
27	v	18
28	v	17
29	v	16
30	v	15
31	v	14
32	v	13
33	v	12
34	v	11
35	v	10
36	v	9
37	v	8
38	v	7
39	v	6
40	v	5
41	v	4
42	v	3
43	v	2
44	v	1

Second Division

45	Ardneath	v	Falkirk
46	Ayr	v	Partick
47	Dundee	v	St Mirren
48	Hamilton	v	Bath
49	String	v	Albion Rovers

Third Division

50	Clydebank	v	Clyde
51	Dundee	v	Portsmouth
52	Forfar	v	Brechin

TOMORROW

FA Carling Premiership

53	Barnsley	v	Chelsea
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Nationwide Football League

First Division	v	Second Division	
54	West Bromwich Albion	v	Wolves

TEAM SHEET

Newcastle v Aston Villa

Covington v Bolton

Leeds v Crystal Palace

Leicester v Southampton

London City v Liverpool

Nottingham Forest v Manchester United

Sheffield Wednesday v West Ham

Southampton v Newcastle

Southend v Birmingham

Southampton v Coventry

It often pays to stick with the devil you know even if the devils you know are close to drawing their footballing pensions

The prefix 'canny', as applied to Ken Dalglish, has become one of football's most enduring clichés, and Dalglish's dabblings in the transfer market this week suggest that it's also one of the most convincing. It doesn't take a genius to work out that a 26,000 full house every match (and a waiting list as long as the proverbial arm), a wealthy benefactor with his fingers in most of the pies in the North-east, and an income of over £13m generated from the recent sale of players, all adds up to a healthy bank balance.

Which must mean that, despite the apparently tight financial constraints placed on the football club by the pic, Dalglish has a few bob to rub together. Yet, in his attempt to do what not even 'the Messiah' has managed to do for 71 years – bring the championship to St James' Park – Dalglish has gone back to Liverpool and recruited two members of the Anfield old guard, Ian Rush and John Barnes, combined age: 68; combined transfer fee: £0. But then Dalglish knows a thing or two about signing players to win championships, and anyway, he may well have a point (although he'll need at least 75 to win it). Which is that, for all the air miles clocked up during the close season by managers who returned from far flung destinations (i.e., Scandinavia) with the latest 'for Flo' or 'Trond in tow', the reality is that it often pays to stick with the devil you know rather than the devil you haven't really got a clue about, and who could end up costing you an arm and a leg and giving you a sore head in return.

Even if the devils you know are close to drawing their footballing pensions, and couldn't get into the

first teams at Liverpool and Leeds respectively. Look, for example, at Blackburn's Roy Hodgson, who says he "won't be buying any players I don't know, now or in the future"; expect Ewood Park to be brimming with ex-Inter Milan, Switzerland and Bristol City stars by the year 2000. Look, too, at Wim Jansen, whose two major recruits at Celtic have been his former Feyenoord charges Henrik Larsson and Regi Blanke.

Thing is, being a football manager is such a precarious job that you can't really blame those who play it safe. Howard Wilkinson once claimed that "there are only two types of managers: those who've been sacked, and those who'll be sacked in the future"; and it was Wilkinson who, as manager of Leeds, went back to his old club Sheffield Wednesday

and relieved them of £1.75m worth of "talent" in Lee Chapman, Nigel Worthington, John Pemberton and Jon Newson.

But Wilko's favouritism pales into insignificance compared to that shown by Ron Atkinson to Kevin Richardson, who is perhaps the palest, skinniest player ever to have played professional football. Cynics will claim BFR's aim was to portray himself as more tamed and omnipotent than he actually is by ensuring Richardson was his constant companion, although the man himself will tell you it was that sweet left foot that did the trick. Whatever the reason, wherever BFR went (to Real Sociedad, Aston Villa and Coventry) Richardson was sure to go too.

Quite what Dave "Route One" Bassett saw in Glyn "on the deck" Hodges is more of a mystery, yet Bassett signed Hodges for Wimbledon, Watford and Sheffield United. Ditto Graham Taylor's preoccupation with Tony Daley. Having already inexplicably launched Daley's brief England career, Taylor went back to Aston Villa to sign the winger for

Wolves, where he's been equally ineffective. It must have been something in the hair.

Graeme Souness' bond with Barry Venison is more understandable. See, Souness has always been an image man and let's face it, any one's going to look good alongside Barry Venison in post-match press conferences. So having had first hand experience of Barry's dress sense at Liverpool, Souness lured him to Turkey when he took over at Galatasaray, then rescued him when he left Southampton job.

Gerry Francis' favourite pastime used to be signing his old Bristol Rovers protégés while Mark McGhee is another who has an unhealthy tendency for renewing old playing acquaintances (the fans won't have anything to do with him) from his Reading and Leicester days.

But none of these liaisons are as unfathomable as that between Terry Hurlock and Ian Branfoot, who signed the volatile midfielder three times: for Reading, Southampton and Fulham. Dalglish's new signings should make all of an impact, even if the once prolific Kuske managed a paltry three goals last season, and the highlight of Barnes' season was that speculative skimmer against Southampton. But if anyone doubts Dalglish's judgment, they'd be as well to recall that Brian Clough, when he became Nottingham Forest manager in 1975, signed some of the players: John McGovern, John O'Hare and Archie Gemmill – who had helped him win the title with Derby in 1972. There was nothing sentimental about it; that wasn't Cloughie's style. No, he was convinced they could do it again. And, inevitably, he was right.

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Liverpool aim to find forward gear

Phil Shaw looks for new beginnings in the weekend's Premiership programme

What a strange, staccato season it has been so far. Disrupted by internationals involving not a single Englishman, by Champions' League action featuring a club who last won the championship between the wars, and by a floodlight failure at a new hi-tech stadium, the stop-go start must make the British School of Motoring wish they were sponsoring the Premiership.

For the clubs who had slipped straight into the fast lane, particularly those like Blackburn, West Ham and Leicester who were expected merely to potter along, the snarl-up was as welcome as rush hour on the M6. To the teams spluttering in their wake, notably the Merseyside clubs and Aston Villa, the period theoretically offered a chance for much-needed retuning.

Not so, the Liverpool manager, Roy Evans, complained yesterday. Far from the break allowing them to regroup after gaining a solitary point from two games, it meant they were "left to stew for 10 days".

Evans' mood might have been better if he had been able to name Robbie Fowler for the first time this season at Blackburn. Fowler aggravated a knee injury in training on Thursday, thus ensuring that attention focuses on his fellow Spice Boy, Steve McManaman, after the

fare of his on-off transfer to Barcelona.

Cautioning against panic, Evans said: "We have to be careful not to rip things apart after one bad game." Yet his reticence to sell McManaman could be interpreted as doing precisely that.

Blackburn have cruised to six points, a total they did not reach until November last season. "It doesn't make us champions," Roy Hodgson said. Rovers' new manager proving he has already mastered the Premier League points system, Liverpool will be highly motivated. Proper teams prepare properly."

Hodgson admitted he had tried to persuade the player leading Liverpool today, Paul Ince, to follow him from Internazionale. "Signing him was a realistic possibility, though to some extent we were fooled by the possibility that he'd stay at Inter. When the move did come at Inter, we had to be careful not to rip things apart after one bad game."

It is also reunion time at Goodison Park, where Danny Williamson and David Unsworth are set to make their debuts for Everton and West Ham, each

having started the season in the opposition camp. For a third player facing ex-colleagues, the Croatian centre-back Slaven Bilic, the Hammers that concern him most are sure to be John Hartson and Paul Kitson.

Harry Redknapp's attacking duo have transformed the prospects for West Ham, leaving Howard Kendall envious. "I just hope that whatever partnership we have, of Duncan Ferguson and A N Other, will gel just as well," the Everton manager said.

Although Everton have played only once – losing at home to promoted Crystal Palace – Kendall's problems in attracting top-class recruits have created a mood only victory can dispel.

Villa have used the hiatus to go "back to basics", as Brian Little put it, successive opening losses having forced him to revert to three at the back at Liverpool Old Boys, aka Newcastle. That, in turn, means Dwight Yorke and Stan Collymore will shed the third member of the strikeforce which was supposed to take the division by storm, Sava Milosevic.

Someone's 100 per cent records must go as Leicester collide with Manchester United. Martin O'Neill, having beaten two of last year's top five, will not sound plausible should a win over the champions be followed by his customary gratitude for "three more points towards survival".

Ian Wright needs only a single strike at Southampton to equal Cliff Bastin's record of 178 goals for Arsenal. Like Wright, Leeds, at home to Palace, hope to score for the third match running. After netting in only 17 of the 38 fixtures last season – compared with 19 by Wright alone – it would be like George Graham sporting a paisley bandana in the dug-out.

Sunderland are also waiting for a work permit for Jovan Kirovski, an American striker who they have arranged to sign for £800,000 from Borussia Dortmund. They hope for better luck with their application than Manchester United had

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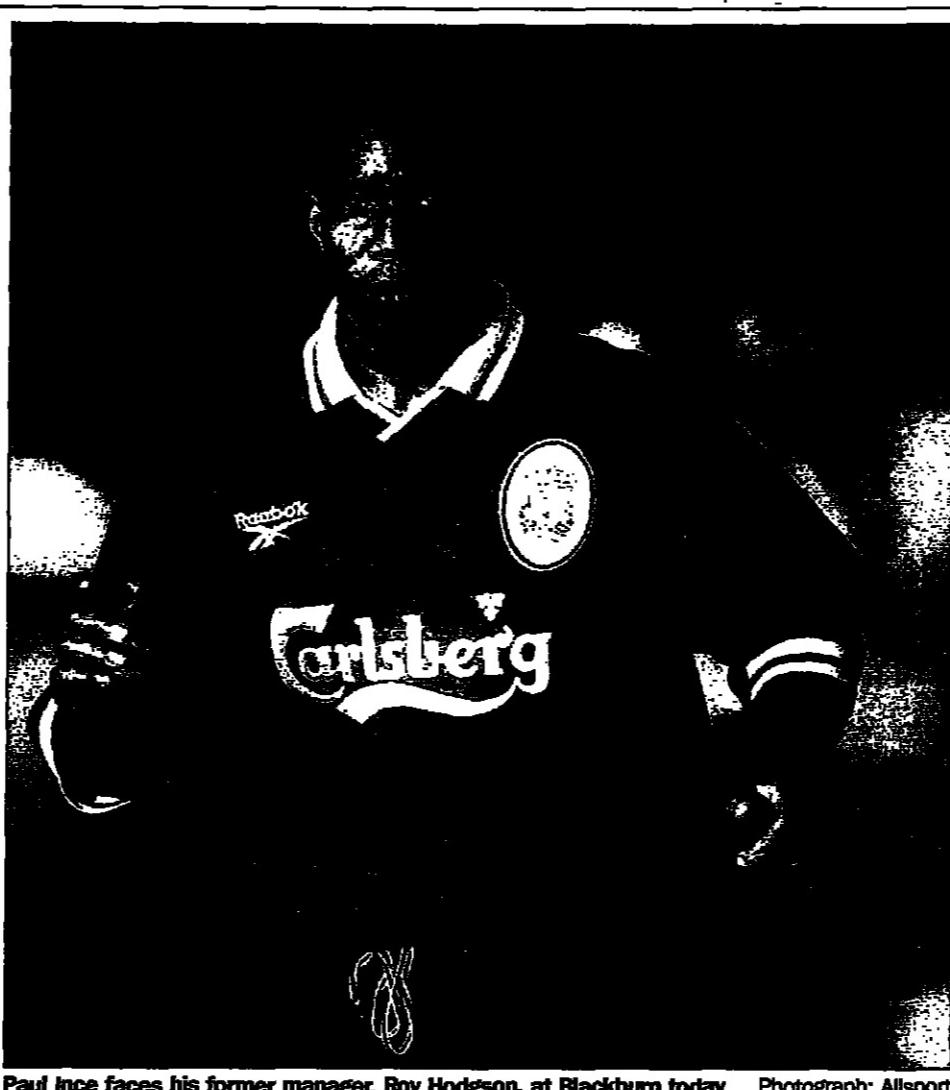
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Tottenham's offer of £600,000 for the striker Neil Davis. Leeds

have turned down a request from Crewe to take the transferred Carlton Palmer on loan.



Phil Ince faces his former manager, Roy Hodgson, at Blackburn today. Photograph: Allsport

Spurs agree fee for Nowak

ALAN NIXON

Tottenham Hotspur are signing Peter Nowak, Poland's veteran midfielder, in an emergency £600,000 deal. A price was agreed yesterday by Nowak's German club, 1860 Munich, and a two-year contract worth around £500,000 this season has also been negotiated ahead of a work permit. A consistent performer for both club and country, Nowak is being allowed to move because he could go for nothing at the end of the season.

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Wales set up Brazil double

Wales are on the brink of landing a prestigious double header with the world champions, Brazil. Bobby Gould's side, rated 90th in the world by the sport's world governing body, Fifa, are negotiating to play the Brazilians home and away before the World Cup finals start in France on 10 June.

The home match would be played outside the principality on a Premiership ground near the Welsh border, with Everton's Goodison Park, Old Trafford, Anfield or Villa Park the favourites.

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IMAGE OF THE WEEK A welcome respite from the scorching sun ... a blanket of fog descends on the beach at St Ives, as paddlers splash their way through the temporary gloom. Picture by David Swanborough using a Canon T90 with a 300mm lens at f11, 1/350th of a second on Kodak Multispeed rated at 640ASA

To order a copy of this picture, for £15, phone 0171 293 2534



the long weekend

THE INDEPENDENT • SATURDAY 23 AUGUST 1997

WORDS OF THE WEEK

The perfect kiss-off: flattery, then the boot

Steven Berkoff, right, has been reading a selection of short stories on Radio 4. This is an extract from 'The Agent', a bleak tale about an actor who cannot find work



directory with your credits listed underneath a third-class agent. This would suggest, by implication, that you, Harry, were a *third-class actor!* No. Never.

BUT THERE was one agent left who, he had no doubt, would understand his gifts. He had, at various times in the past, considered him. But, like all really good actors, he'd never felt quite ready — or, for that matter, worthy. Now he was considering the possibility once again. Whereas before it had been pure fantasy, and self-dramatisation, circumstances were now gently nudging him to more realistic solutions. He was

out on a plank, and was being pushed, albeit gradually. He could look down and see, far below, the writhing limbs of the unemployed actors who were drowning in the agonies of their frustration. Exhausted, swimming from rock to rock, seeking solace in small jobs, and then being washed away by the sheer force of the mass behind them.

Was H ready to jump back into that throng? Was he ready to eke out a life as a player of bits and pieces — the odd telly work, or jobs teaching louts at some dreadful drama school?

Their interest in the art of classical speech was minimal compared to their fantasies of starring as gun-toting serial killers.

As a young actor he was no less devoted than a priest to the cloth and, while not exactly a celibate, had never really fanned deep relationships. In lonely and meditative moments, he gave the instability of his profession as his excuse. And, anyway, he wanted nothing to interfere with his goal of being a servant of the classics.

In the early days his light was seen to shine in some of the major rep's. He drew many admirers of his dazzling Petruccio, his satanic Macbeth, his sensitive Richard II.

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demands on his love and energy, which would temper the single-minded and obsessive drive which the gods demand before their gifts will be bestowed. But he had to admit that his devotion was to a rather tough god. This god was one which reminded him of his father and really had, as yet, rewarded him with nothing except isolation. Perhaps one carries the father patterns like a tape within one, and in some inevitable way constructs one's own rejection.

Consequently, it will be perceived that the agents' neglect of the simple dues of respectful behaviour, which might have earned contempt in a healthy body, opened in Harry a wound a mile wide. Into it flew every doubt he ever had. He felt he was in a void.

But the one agent he had resisted would without doubt take him on to his books — as he does eventually with everyone. For none shall escape him. Being methodical, as behaves bachelor actors, H made his will and settled his affairs. Then, in an act that had a touch of theatricality about it, he calmly threw himself under a train at Leicester Square Tube.

THIS WAS a tad uncharacteristically thoughtless of H. It must have demonstrated the stress he was under.

For, had he known what chaos this was to cause on the Piccadilly Line that afternoon, his own natural, touching concern not to cause others discomfort would surely have led him to make a less conspicuous exit.

The Agent is repeated tonight at 12.30 am on Radio 4.

INSIDE

John Walsh meets Magnus Magnusson 3

Mark Little's diary from Edinburgh 3

Travel & outdoors



Beautiful Ireland 9
Namibia and Zimbabwe 10, 11
Bank Holiday outings 13
Gardens 14
Sweet sculptures from bees 15

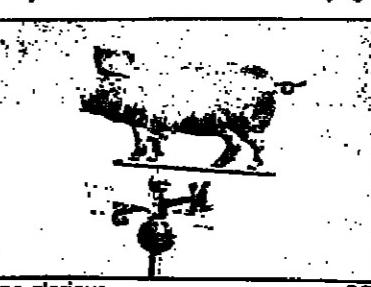


PLUS

Games, crossword	2
Arts, reviews	485
Books	6, 7, 8
All consuming	16-17
Motoring	19
Money, property	20-24
TV, radio reviews	25
Today's TV	Back page



The Bank of England — closed on Monday



Vane-glorious 20

WORDS FOR THE WEEKEND

Where did Leonardo da Vinci come from? For an answer, you can bank on Bill Hartston

"Are banks open on a bank holiday?" I innocently asked my wife once. As soon as the words were out of my mouth, I realised that I had committed a *Manly Daily*. The term is used to describe a question of such blatant manity that it answers itself. Not just any old blindingly stupid question, such as "How are the English cricket team doing?" but one in which the answer is shouted out in the formulation of the question itself.

The expression dates back to a holiday I spent in Australia several years ago. A friend of mine had been running an event in Manly, a suburb of Sydney, and was on the phone to the local paper. On hearing that a piece would appear in their next issue, my friend asked: "How often does the *Manly Daily* come out?"

Perhaps the clearest example of the

genre, however, was uttered in the office of this very newspaper, when I heard one journalist ask our then transport correspondent, Christian Wolmar, "Are you Jewish, Christian?" (And while on the subject of Mr Christian, I must confess to having been flummoxed for some time when I was asked the name of the ship in *Mutiny on the Bounty*.)

A friend once admitted to having the following conversation with a librarian: "Do you have *The Diary of Anne Frank*?" "Do you know the name of the author?" "Sorry, no."

The reason *Manly Daily*s are so easily perpetrated is that in every case one neglects the primary meaning of a word because it has become embedded in a larger phrase.

A bank holiday is no longer primarily a day on which banks are closed; it's our

holiday, not theirs, and might as well be a bang collage day for all we care: *The Diary of Anne Frank* is a book and film, not Anne Frank's diary, and *Daily* is just another word for a newspaper, like *Gazette* or *News*.

If you are in the habit of asking people what day of the week Good Friday falls on this year, or what time the *Ten O'clock News* is on (it's about five past ten if there's football before it — do the Trades Descriptions people know about this?), or what town Leonardo da Vinci came from, then you might like to consider becoming a physician. An Oxford classics student I knew once went to his doctor and complained of pain between his ribs. "Ah," said the doctor, "you've got *intracostal neuralgia*."

"That's what I said," replied the classicist, sounding most unimpressed.



No rest from mental fight

"I opened as usual with 1.e4, but was rather surprised when he replied with 'n15' and told me this was the Go tournament. Thinking quickly, I played T23 and informed him that I had sunk his battleship, which would have been fine if he hadn't passed me the doubling cube and used all his seven letters in forming the word NO-TRUMP on a triple word score. Luckily for me, he fell down a snake the next move and I was back in the game."

At least, I think that was what the man in the Meatloaf T-shirt said as I passed him at the Mind Sports Olympiad at the Royal Festival Hall. Or it may have been half a dozen other chaps in six other T-shirts. Sprawled over six floors of the building, the Mind Sports Olympiad comprises competitions in 39 different games. From well-established international mental sports such as chess, draughts, bridge and backgammon, through the oriental world of Shogi, Go and Chinese Chess, the African Oware (in which the players appear to be absent-mindedly shifting olive stones between cocktail dishes), there is also room for Scrabble, Skat (a card game popular in Germany), Jigsaws, Othello, Rummikub, Speed Reading, memory and IQ tests, and a host of things I had never seen before, with names such as Abalone and Fanorona. There is even a Hare & Tortoise competition. My money's on the Tortoise.

With 1,000 entrants signed up before the event began, and another 250 enrolling for

The organisers of the first Mind Sports Olympiad believe that thinking can broaden the mind. William Hartston is not so sure

competitions on the first day, the event has surpassed expectations. Thanks to sponsorship from the Swedish insurance giant Skandia, the total prize fund is over £70,000 with an additional £35,000 in goods.

Organisationaly, the whole thing appears – perhaps inevitably – rather shambolic. Apart from the medal ceremonies, with their garish trumpet-fanfare-adorned pomp, there was little sign of any co-ordination between the various events. The banners festooned around the building confirmed that everything was part of one unified event, but the only real competition was the constant sight of harassed-looking members of the organising committee, either collapsed in the press room or, more often, wandering up and down the stairs taking to each other wearily through doorways. But perhaps the Olympic Games themselves are much the same.

By holding so many events under one roof, and attracting several world champions, even in events that most of us didn't even realise held a world championship, the first Mind Sports Olympiad has undoubtedly succeeded in one objective: this is the greatest Gamesfest ever seen in Britain. But there must be

considerable doubt about whether the event has supported the organisers' underlying beliefs about intellectual games.

The event was the brainchild of Tony Buzan, a lecturer and consultant who runs courses designed to enhance people's mental capacities, and chess grandmaster Raymond Keene. Both have long propagated the view that intellectual games are good for you: "Mens sana in corpore sano," says Buzan whenever he is given the chance. One of those unhealthily fit-looking 55-year-olds who bound around exuding energy, Buzan maintains that physical and mental fitness go hand in hand. At the Festival Hall this week, however, "mens sana in pot-belly protruding between jeans and T-shirt" might have been a more appropriate motto.

The question is whether playing intellectual games really helps develop the mind for more practical purposes, and the evidence is less clear than the Mind Sports proponents like to believe. Take the world memory champion, Dominic O'Brien, for example, who is hoping to confirm his supremacy in the Memory event at the Olympiad. Able to memorise an entire pack of cards in 40 sec-

onds flat, or a string of some 200 digits, or reel off the answers to all the questions ever seen in Trivial Pursuit, he is clearly a bright chap. Fit, well-dressed and having a wide range of interests, he stands out from the average group of contestants. Having trained himself to perform these prodigious feats of memory, he now does it for a living. And that is the great sorrow of intellectual games.

Just think of all those great minds battling away on the South Bank – people who are the best in the world at their particular areas of mental expertise. And what do they choose to do with their finely honed minds? They play draughts, remember long strings of digits, and shuffle olive pits.

Why do these fine minds not offer their services to London Underground, to help them put up signs at sensible places in Waterloo station so that people can find their way to the South Bank in the first place? Why do they not design an all-British Millennium Dome?

The answer is that playing games well is not good for you at all. It's playing games badly that helps mental development. Learning a game is mind-stretching, but once you have gained sufficient expertise at chess, bridge or gin rummy, all you're doing is improving your skills in one narrow direction. If the losers at this Olympiad who deserve the medals.

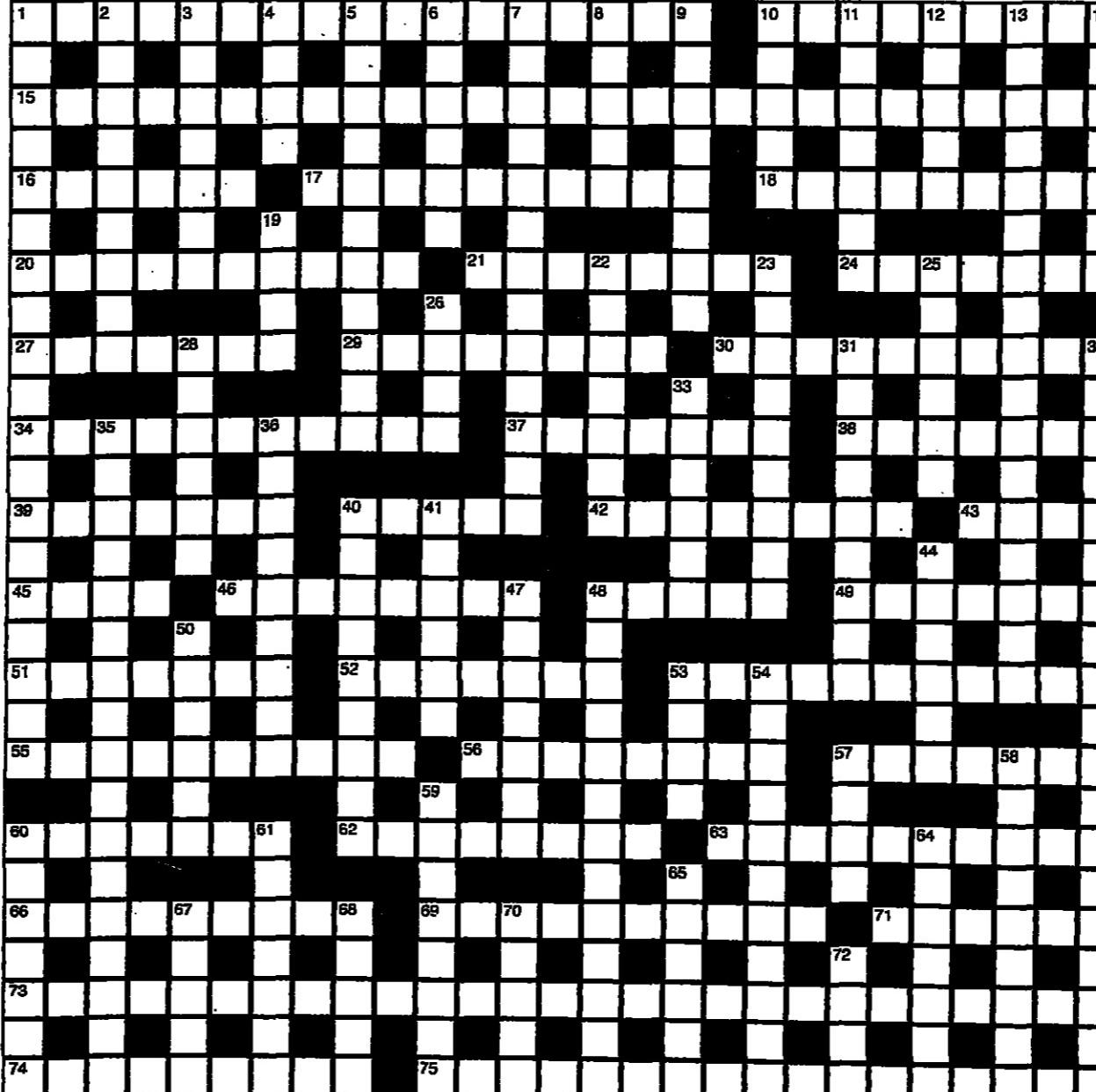
William Hartston will be giving contestants silly things to do in the Mind Sports Olympiad Creativity competition this morning.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS JUMBO CROSSWORD

Concise

Across

- 1 Non-violent opposition (7,10)
- 10 Not requiring oxygen (9)
- 15 National quality controllers (7,9,11)
- 16 To do with physicians (6)
- 17 Rare (10)
- 18 More majestic (9)
- 20 Native of southern Spain (10)
- 21 Make up (prescription) (8)
- 24 Cut viciously (7)
- 27 Aridity (7)
- 29 Showing peevish impatience (8)
- 30 Decorator's item (5,5)
- 34 State of serfdom (11)
- 37 Sleeveless vest (7)
- 38 Washer to protect electrical wire (7)
- 39 Unit of radiation dose (7)
- 40 Quick (5)
- 42 Canines (3-5)
- 43 Curved supporting structure (4)
- 45 Makes noise of small dog (4)
- 46 Upper-body garment (8)
- 48 Put clothes on (5)
- 49 Native of south-east Asian country (7)
- 51 Touching line (7)
- 52 Wanton damage to property (7)
- 53 Italian national policemen (11)
- 55 Interpretation of charts (3-7)
- 56 Best time (4,4)
- 57 Art using everyday material (7)
- 60 Roaming round (2,5)
- 62 Those who reproduce an event (8)
- 63 Item to fill a deficiency (4-6)
- 66 The hour of the place (5,4)
- 69 Spring items of confectionery (6,4)
- 71 Put up resistance (6)
- 73 Female emergency welfare organisation (5,1,5,9,7)
- 74 Crockery for main meal (6,3)
- 75 As if happening in a fantasy (5,2-10)
- 77 Manipulated (4)
- 78 Submissive state? (8)
- 79 Makes nice arrangement of leaves (4,3)
- 80 Leg failing? Your walking won't then be this (2-5)
- 81 Spilling the beans on former spouse acting as model (8)
- 82 Former Royal name for wood and hill in South Africa (10)
- 83 As meeting is bad formulates a puzzle (11)
- 87 Note TV company's nerve-centres (7)
- 88 Here's nothing to restrict what one thinks (7)
- 89 Apt site for making pies (7)
- 90 Journalists having no drink to keep down (5)
- 92 Students lacking not very serious
- 93 Cause of the day? (8)
- 94 Blades cut head off swine (4)
- 95 Victory in Europe secured by one bringing ashore sweet-smelling plant (8)
- 98 Woman would like some of their energy (5)
- 99 In general, deliveries to everyone (7)
- 100 Irish unit seizing gold compound yielding metal (4,3)
- 102 Chap conceals gun, say, in clothing (7)
- 103 The ordinary MP is to support Bishops and Queen? (11)
- 104 One left no excessive praise for knotty state (10)
- 105 Cry of surprise cleared other ranks from the passage (8)



- 13 Make the logo price sharp, an optical astronomer might buy it (17)
- 14 Go back to deal with complaint again? (7)
- 15 Rough type of craft, hard to get in (4)
- 22 Gains after initial loss of a succession of bats men (7)
- 23 A nip is taken in tea, designed to make an impact (9)
- 25 Game time at Irish place (6)
- 26 No drink to be sent up in symphony? (4)
- 28 Current American writer of a bit of verse (6)
- 31 Company doctor pursues taste for something supposed to make a fine search? (9)
- 32 Doctor soldier and priest taking action with hesitation about it (7,12)
- 33 One leaving Spanish Fascists could keep on rails with this (6)
- 35 Within the last month speaker has become a painter? (8,9)
- 36 Will try to change name on time (9)
- 40 Look at band of similar people (4,5)
- 41 Put up with some forbidden distress (6)
- 44 Know man putting up doghouse (6)
- 47 Utter feel for changes (4,3)
- 48 Program reset printers for multilingual woman? (13)
- 50 No lines in writer which could get up your nose irritatingly (6)
- 53 Endure British fish (4)
- 54 Car, good French roadster, the ultimate in greenness? (6,5)
- 57 Speechless male on Australian truck (4)
- 58 Spotted animal from part of Croatia (9)
- 59 Bank on the Spanish producing verse of low quality (8)
- 60 Not so much restricting boy as giving instructions? (7)
- 61 Behaved like a toad – stomach came first (7)
- 64 Pestered to join church covered with greenery (7)
- 65 Awfully raty about one yellowish-white powder (6)
- 67 Expression of surprise on leaving French coast road, finding agreeable spot (5)
- 68 Number three possibly (5)
- 70 Outsize container of old Italian people (5)
- 72 The place of anagrams (4)

Cryptic

Across

- 1 Give too much for inspired salary? (3,7,3,4)
- 10 One catching fish in the sea finds answer in amalgamation (9)
- 15 Make normal use of tobacco there! (3,4,2,4,4,3,5,2)
- 16 Old German chemist gives story considerable backing (6)
- 17 Sporting types retain an impression of the plans (1,0)
- 18 Demolish underworld person's status (9)
- 20 Old car worker is exultant (1,0)
- 21 Was monarch keeping Sabbath in a
- 24 Makes nice arrangement of leaves (4,3)
- 27 Leg failing? Your walking won't then be this (2-5)
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- 54 One left no excessive praise for knotty state (10)
- 55 Cry of surprise cleared other ranks from the passage (8)
- 57 See lid come off with an agreeable sound (7)
- 60 Saying little non-clerical about study (7)
- 62 Professional fellow refs anew, gets presents (8)
- 63 Artist fibel cruelly, suppressing natural response (10)
- 66 Perhaps the day of the psychiatrist is in decline? (9)
- 67 Cogitates changes to second scientific study (10)
- 71 Asian person returns greeting in Indian port (6)
- 73 Honour for chap doing out pub spirit measures? (7,9,11)
- 74 Give in on French recidive? (9)
- 75 Perhaps Capability Brown comes ashore on headland with Adam? (9,8)

Down

- 1 Bang goes the planet with this? (10,9)
- 2 Treaty is changed in good exchanges of little coin sequence (9)
- 3 An unnatural element of overacting involving one Hun's portrayal (7)
- 4 Hated to get led away, it's a curse (4)
- 5 Comfortable over stays of Wild West characters? (11)
- 6 Drying cloth about right for garden implement (6)
- 7 Mistrusted computer gives these signals indicating one's human? (5,8)
- 8 Hunter willing to participate to capture South American port (5)
- 9 Yet a minimal price for service (8)
- 10 Wandering nomad spirit (5)
- 11 Opposes island getting swamped in holidays (7)
- 12 A right order to a distinctive fragrance (5)

How to enter

The first correct cryptic solution will win the *Oxford Companions to British History, English Literature and English Language*. The first six cryptic runners-up and the first six concise runners-up will each receive a copy of *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. Mark entries "Concise Jumbo" or "Cryptic Jumbo" and send them to PO Box 4015, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. Entries to arrive by noon on Thursday, 4 September. Solutions and winners' names will appear on Saturday, 6 September.

For the weather, traffic reports, the sky at night, and Damien Hirst's cartoon sage of artistic angst ... TURN TO PAGE 25

Games people play

Pandora Melly learns to catch old ladies with rum

Alexander Thynn, Marquess of Bath, 63, writer and painter

Butterfly-collecting has died out completely. It was once a passion in my life and, for a teenager, I had a very good collection. Recently I found a letter home in which I said I'd just caught an old lady. I remember my mother's bewilderment because she didn't realise that old ladies are moths, which is not usual for every mother to know.

There was butterfly-collecting fraternity at school. The others called us the Buggers, but we would have preferred if they had called us entomologists. We made night excursions and sugared the trees to catch moths. You mix treacle and rum and smear it on the bark, and the moths smell it from a long way away, and come and eat it. Once they've had a bit of rum, they become dopey, and you don't have to run very fast to catch them. Drunken moths. Rum is the secret of all the glories.

I know that butterfly-collecting is often held up as a symbol of something sinister: if you go stalking after butterflies, you must be a stalker; but I don't think we thought of it like that. It was more for the love of nature; an excuse to be walking around the woods and making a collection of the beautiful things you see when you go on walks: A butterfly collection is a reminder of those hours spent strolling through nature.

When I took my English butterflies to France to add to my French collection, some horrible little mites got in, and my butterflies became a big banquet for them. It looked so miserable to leave a lot of bodiless wings in a box, so I'm afraid

Backgammon Chris Bray

A pea-souper had descended on London and it was oddly quiet in our rooms in Baker Street. Holmes mused before a roaring fire, apparently oblivious to all around him.

"Holmes, I wonder if I may venture a question on your favourite game?"

"By all means, Watson. My case load contains nothing of great moment, so what better way to spend an evening?"

"I have noticed that when I play my pace is constant. I roll the dice, study the candidate moves as you have taught me, make my selection and move my men. Yet when I watch you, I notice that you play some moves with no apparent thought, whilst others take a considerable time. You take the longest of time when dealing with cube decisions."

"Ah, Watson," replied the great detective, "you have hit upon a key factor of successful backgammon. You cannot play like an automaton. This is a highly complex game even to someone of my intellect. It is true that there are positions where the difference in equity between two possible moves is minute. For example the play of a '11' in a bear-off. In such instances I will often move quickly and conserve my mental energy for the more difficult decisions. Playing top-class backgammon is very tiring and you should not expend energy needlessly."

"On many moves my choice may affect the type of game that will result; on others there may well be a huge equity difference between two candidates. In these situations I will take the time to apply my knowledge and techniques to make sure that I make the right choice more often than not. Even great players are said to make the best move only 80 per cent of the time and my research shows that even this estimate may be too high. As for doubling, look at it this way. In a game you may make 30 moves but you are likely to have to make no more than two doubling cube decisions. It is therefore worth investing the time to evaluate the position accurately. As I have told you before, the largest errors made when moving the men do not begin to equal the equity given away by bad cube decisions."

"Thank you, Holmes. As ever, a lucid explanation."

"Rudimentary, my dear Watson."

The usual Saturday Games Page concise crossword, chess, bridge and perplexity features will return next week.



The pass master



**John Walsh
talks to
MAGNUS MAGNUSSON**

The black executioner's chair, now resting in Magnus Magnusson's Glasgow home, is smaller than you'd expect, its creased leather worn to a chamois softness from the 1,400-odd quaking bottoms that have sat on it over the 25 years of *Mastermind*. Look, I said, the arm-rests have become all silvered and pitted because of all the straining, sweaty hands that have clutched them in agonies of information-retrieval... "No no," said Magnusson equably, "that's because the metal supports have become loosened from all its journeys across the UK. It's just normal wear and tear."

Oh blast. Any fan of the BBC's most legendarily challenging quiz show would prefer to believe in the chair's iconic status as a torture victim's throne than in the boring reality. Despite Magnus's cheery, off-camera warm-up cry to contenders that "it's only a bloody game", a considerable army of job-frustrated show-offs, pub-quiz colossi and chenille-skirted know-all have come to regard *Mastermind* as the ultimate arena of intelligence on display—the Star Chamber where their knowledge of Byzantine ceramics, their weird, hermitic familiarity with the life of Pope Innocent III will allow them to make the transition from sad, fact-harbouring bore to nationally renowned intellectual giant.

In a couple of weeks, the great quiz will be history, its doomy signature-tune ("Approaching Menace" by Neil Richardson) will be heard no more, its Caithness Glass rose-bowl trophies become collectors' items at posh car-boot sales, and its patrician, Scots-Icelandic inquisitor will be looking for something else to occupy his spare time.

The chair, with its sternly functional lines, looks out of place in Magnusson's handsome *hau-houren* living-room. There's a long comfy sofa, accessorised by its owner's pipe and tartan slippers. On the walls, several oil paintings suggestive of elemental disarray—Mayhill trains in the rain, a stormy landscape of windswept Scandinavian barns, an Auerbach-ish portrait—loom over the figure of Magnusson's sweet grandson, Magnus *minimus*, his daughter Sally's youngest child, as he plunks along the family grand piano and goes in search of chocolate bourbons. Magnus *maximus*, now 67, proudly displays his accumulated glassware; an Irish lead crystal rendering of the famous chair, a rose bowl of his very own from the Caithness craftsmen, and a jar of sweets from a neighbour, its cotton lid embroidered with the words: "Magnus. I started 1972. I finished 1997."

The great man is too busy for comfort today, disttracted by a clamour of ringing telephones, photographers, a flock of media-circus buzzards alerted by both the demise of *Mastermind* and the launch of a history of the show by Magnusson himself (published on 4 September). He is charming and funny throughout, however, patiently rehearsing anecdotes, recalling names and scores and passes with the utmost interest, as if it were his whole life. Which it isn't, of course, as you can see from his *Who's Who* entry: you need a jeweller's lens to find the single mention of *Mastermind* amid the flood of popular history books (on Iceland, Scotland and Ireland), archaeology works and *belle-lettres* (*Strange Stories, Amazing Facts, Pass the Port*), not to mention the dozen translations from Icelandic sagas, the umpteen "contributions" and "introductions" to other books, the university fellowships and honorary degrees and dignified committees he's chaired in his busy life. Did he care that all this eclectic achievement was overshadowed by *Mastermind*?

"It's eclipsed the other things as far as the general public is concerned," he said, in that judicious and trustworthy Scots burr. "But before I did *Mastermind*, I was doing very worthy and earnest work on *Chronicle* [the popular archaeology show he wrote and presented from 1966 to 1981] which was, I thought, extremely important and very rewarding. I was distilling all the knowledge provided by good academics into a more popular and accessible form, and it took me all over the world, meeting people. *Mastermind* started purely as a sideline, a little earner and a welcome one, with five children on the go, school fees and mortgages, the full catastrophe."



'The idea of the steely-eyed, rat-jawed guy is not terribly me... I'm a terrible old softie'

PHOTO: COLIN MACPHERSON

I wondered about the image of the inquisitor he so endearingly holds in the public mind, the silkenly courteous, potentially ruthless, when-did-you-last-see-your-father? magistrate-cum-Gestapo-officer, asking people things relentlessly, out of the darkness. "That was an image I was required to foster in the early series. I was actually called the Interrogator in the credits. But the curt, laconic delivery—"Correct", "Nope"—was simply a function of the speed required to get through as many questions as possible. And the idea of the steely-eyed, rat-jawed guy is not terribly me. The contenders all say "I'm a terrible old softie. I liked them all, you see. And although the programme, in its presentation, relies on a melodramatic situation they knew I wasn't there to trip them up."

The highest-ever score was 41, achieved in 1995 by Kevin Ashman, a civil servant from Winchester (special subject: Dr Martin Luther King Jr and the Civil Rights Movement). "His score was theoretically impossible," said Magnusson. "Because I time all the questions and answers at studio speed with a stopwatch, and there should be time for exactly 20 questions in each round, if the answers are prompt and accurate. But some people, like Ashman, are so bloody fast, they do the impossible..." Magnusson displays a kind of benevolent awe about others of his charges. "Jennifer Keaveney," he said wonderingly, "who scored 40 in 1986, was an absolute automaton. While she was answering, she switched into some computer mode, completely

deadpan. I noticed when I shook her hand afterwards it was ice-cold, as if she'd become a shaman... And there was Mary-Elizabeth Raw, the vet in the wheelchair, who had entered, as much as anything, to prove that disablement did not affect your mind. She wanted to win very badly indeed, and to score 40 was a colossal triumph of the will."

I reminded him of the downfall of Susan Reynolds, which, like 10 million others, I watched, horrified, in 1974: an Oxford classics student with the face of a Dresden shepherdess, she sailed through the heats (special subject: "Greek Mythology"), hummed through the semi-final ("The Works of Richard Wagner") and entered the final taking "British Ornithology" as her subject. Disaster struck. Due to a fit of amnesia, panic attack or hubris, she couldn't answer any questions about birds. As she whispered "Pass" again and again in a sad little mantra, Magnus said, in his kindly way, "Do try to answer some of these..." and the country collectively wept for her. "It emerged later that she'd had an accident that afternoon, and was hit by the wardrobe door in her hotel room," said Magnusson. "There was a great bruise on her forehead, hidden by make-up. And I have a theory that she'd chosen the wrong aspect of her subject—she knew all about Bird Identification, but I suppose she thought Ornithology sounded posher..."

He really does seem to have total recall of this quarter-century of faces, this Niagara of questions, this blizzard of facts. The book, *I've Started So I'll*

Finish, is beguilingly crammed with good stories, especially the moments of Magnusson's fluffs and botched questions ("The solanaceous plant *Lycopersicum esculentum* is a genus of which tomato?"). There's the lady contender who was taking Valium to calm her nerves and got plastered on two glasses of sherry, and the Beethoven expert who strode off the set in exasperation when his answers weren't accepted ("We were terribly slack in those days; we wouldn't dream of checking the special-subject questions..."). Hadn't he fallen out with some of them? "I took a quite irrational dislike to one man, who came on with a dog-collar, called himself the Reverend Robert Peters from some theological college. I found him insufferably arrogant. The day after his appearance, people started saying he was some kind of imposter. Then the *Newspaper of the World* exposed him. He was an Anglican vicar, who'd been unfrocked for bigamy, had gone to New Zealand and married again, so he was a tragicomist, and had returned to England with his gorgeous new wife." What was his subject? "The Life and Times of Archbishop William Temple. He didn't do very well," Magnusson noted with grim satisfaction.

The quiz-master sometimes gives the impression of believing his own image as the fount of all knowledge. Unbelievably, people often ring him at home to ask him the capital of South Dakota or what won the Grand National in 1933, and he has a sneaky edge of asking his interlocutors what they know.

"Most of the answers go by in a blur, unless it's

a subject that interests me, like history or archaeology. But some things stick—like when I learnt the meaning of the word 'shibboleth'..."

He cocked an interrogative eyebrow at me.

You mean a password or rallying cry?" "Yes, but what's *really* interesting is..." The eyebrow lifted again. I seemed to be taking part in some test. "...Is..." Is that it's the old Hebrew word for an ear of corn and, in the war between the Gileadites and the Ephraimites, was used as a password for detecting infiltrators because, if asked to say the word out loud, the Ephraimites invariably pronounced it "skibboleth"?

Magnusson looked at me. "Well done," he said shortly. "You're the only person who's been able to answer that." I later learnt it's indeed a little test he gives interviewers.

Did he think memory had much to do with intelligence? "I think memory is a factor in intelligence, certainly. If your retrieval system is good, then your intelligence can flourish more." Did he think the concept of "general knowledge" had become a little moth-eaten? "No, I think the enjoyment of knowledge is still there, as you can see from the growth in pub quizzes. You may call it 'trivia', but it's just as important to people as darts and they take it as seriously. I think there's a constant celebration of what you can do inside your head, and *Mastermind* reflected this interest and promoted it as well."

Almost unnoticed, Magnusson has slipped into committee-speak, an idiom with which he is very familiar. His chairmanship of Scottish Natural Heritage, which runs out in 1999 (when I'm 70, the century's over and, as with *Mastermind*, it's the right time to make a graceful exit") is a bureaucratic chore he takes very seriously. Their remit is "to look after and enhance the natural heritage of Scotland and aid its enjoyment and understanding", while briefing the Secretary of State for Scotland on gripping matters of soil erosion, designated areas and scheme facilities. Magnusson's voice drops below his habitual low purr when talking of such things, until you fear we both may fall asleep, but he is reanimated passionately by the subject of birds.

He worries about how to protect the rare Greenland white-fronted geese who have moved *en masse* to Islay. He's concerned about the repercussions of the Common Agricultural Policy on the corn bunting and skylark. He notes that the corncrake, once to be seen in the streets of Edinburgh, "has been driven into the last bastion of the Western Isles. Although the figures are beginning to go up—there were a hundred calling males recorded last year..." Gosh! Was he a twitcher? "No, no." But you sound so... "Well I love 'em. At school I started a Bird Watchers' Society, now called the Ornithology Society," he chuckles. We seem to be back in Susan Reynolds territory. "I won the Public Schools Essay Competition when I was a wee ladie writing about birds." The title? "It was on the mating rituals of blackbirds. In March and April, I used to cycle down to some woods before school, and there one day I saw this ring of male blackbirds with a female in the middle. I couldn't find any reference to bird books, so I wrote about my observations and it was later confirmed that that's what blackbirds do."

He has a thing about badgers too. And archaeological sites (his recreations, according to *Who's Who*, are "digging and delving"). And derivations, both of words and family names ("the name Magnus comes from Charlemagne, 'Carolus Magnus' you see, though the first Magnus was the son of St Olaf of Norway..."). And women. Stories of a mildly scandalous nature have long accreted around Magnus's saintly snow-white bonce. One publishing lady took him to lunch to discuss the publicity schedule of his new book and was startled when he interrupted her, placed an avuncular hand on her arm and breathed, "It's OK. I've booked a room where we can go and make love..." "I don't remember that at all," says Magnusson with a delighted laugh. "If I did it, I was probably winding her up."

There is a decidedly skittish streak about this Establishment figure, a touch of the Viking lurking inside his quiz-master sobriety. He was once invited on to Radio 4's *Any Questions*. The first question was about the safest way to keep football hooligans penned in without danger. Magnusson suggested wiring up their chairs and running an electrical current through them if they misbehaved. "I just thought it needed a bit of irony amid all the earnest stuff," he says. "But they didn't ask me again..." When you ask him what's in store, what new career he can embark on at 67, it's good to hear that he's not settling for writing books in retirement and tartan slippers. "What I'd most like to do now is a TV series on the *Odyssey*, in 24 parts, showing where Nestor's Palace was." Yes that seems an appropriate place for this restless but reassuring figure to end up—bringing an epic down to manageable proportions for ordinary people to enjoy. And just imagine the interviews: "Name?" "Cyclops." "Occupation?" "Giant." "Your special subject?" "Eating sailors." "Your two minutes start... now."

Art's a funny game. Performance art's even funnier. But when you're talkin' alternative performance art at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, crank up the weirdness. Not that I'm saying there are a lot of weird people performing in Edinburgh this year, quite the contrary. Most everyone I've met from Spain, Scotland, Australia, America, New Zealand, Wales, Africa or wherever have been really down-to-earth, sweet folks. Bung them all in the one town, though, for three weeks, with nothing to do but perform and party, and it gets weird enough. Just the way I like it, of course, and one of the reasons I keep coming back.

I have travelled to Edinburgh this year with my own little piece of performance madness called *Psychobubble*, the most freeform and dangerous show I've attempted in a long time. (I haven't been so excited about what is possible on the alternative comedy stage since pre-Neighbours Melbourne in the mid-1980s.)

At the very centre of this whirlwind of comic energy I have a couch—an ugly Mock-Crock velour settee that basically constitutes my set. It is,

Meet Deep Brown, my Couchagotchi

Mark Little on one man's struggle to bring a little added velour to the Festival Fringe

believe, the story of this three-seater that truly exemplifies the special weirdness that is the annual Edinburgh Festival.

To get my audience in the mood for chat, I reckoned I needed to play on their compassion. And what better way to hunt out compassion than to facilitate the need for me to be rescued. And what was the most famous rescue of the last 12 months? Long round-the-world yachtsman Tony Bullimore trapped within his upturned vessel in the Great Southern Ocean for four days, miraculously rescued alive by the Australian Navy.

Perfect. I'll get myself trapped and call for help. Trapped in what? An upturned couch, of course! Let the search begin!

I knew I'd know the right couch when I saw it and sure enough, after scouring a few of the second-hand shops of Brighton, there it was. The couch. "Can I just check if I can carry

it?" I asked. "Sure," said the bloke. "I just need to see if I can dance with it."

"OK," he nodded. "Do you mind if I just take it on the pavement to make sure I can get under it?"

No reply. Just a stare, as I flipped it over and

upturned the big brown bigger on top of me. \$45 he wanted. He got it and I gained a virtual friend.

Rehearsals went smoothly and, apart from

one embarrassing

moment when my wife

caught me talking to myself under the couch in the conservatory, I was happy.

Time to test the couch rescue.

I took the couch—which I had now given artificial intelligence and

renamed Deep Brown—along to the Bolshoi Circus tent during the

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL

97

DIARY

THIS IS DEEP BROWN, THE

COUCHAGOTCHI

BIOLOGICALLY ENGINEERED

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

DO NOT DISTURB AS THIS

COULD RESULT IN DEATH.

Brighton Festival. I took it along to the Battersea Arts Centre in South London.

I found, though, that I couldn't just leave it lying around like a couch because people just used it like a couch. At the Battersea Arts Centre it turned into a props table for some extremely

alternative cabaret.

I was quietly upset. This was my friend. This was weird.

I stood it upright and

attached a sign.

THIS IS DEEP BROWN, THE

COUCHAGOTCHI

BIOLOGICALLY ENGINEERED

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.

DO NOT DISTURB AS THIS

COULD RESULT IN DEATH.

AND NO ONE WANTS TO SIT ON A DEAD COUCH.

London went well. "The Couch" was well reviewed in the press. So was I. We were happy.

Off to Edinburgh. No one seemed to want to ship my couch up North for me. I was getting attached to it anyway. "I'll take it myself," I thought. "I want to be with it."

The whole family were going. My wife and two kids and me. Everywhere we looked, families were going on holidays. Cars stacked up with holiday necessities. Everyone seemed to have tents, sailboards, surfboards, bikes, major

implements of holiday fun strapped to the roofs of their cars. Except us. We had "The Couch". My family were understanding and the ropes were tight.

I got my "friend" to Edinburgh without it being blown off the roof and killing anyone on the M1 (my main fear).

The couch is now starring on the

Edinburgh Fringe. For the first four minutes of my show, that's all you get, a talking upturned couch. It gets a good response and a couple of rounds of applause (which makes me think the shows these people have already seen must have been real rubbish). Yet of course, off-stage, Deep Brown is still just a couch. Success has not spoilt it.

I have now learnt to share my "virtual friend". So far the bloke who plays Richard Burton has had a sleep on it. So has the freak who licks stuff with his genitalia. Assorted hard stage crew have crashed on it. Paul Morrocco and Ole have crashed into it and Mika, the Maori cabaret sensation, has avoided it.

The Edinburgh Festival is a spectacle and I truly recommend a visit. But be warned: the special weirdness that is this festival can have you loving performance art you would not normally go and see. I personally know of crowds who've thrived to an ugly upturned couch. Edinburgh Festival. Glad to be here, hope to be back.

Mark Little's "Psychobubble" is at the Assembly Rooms, venue 3 (0131-226 2428) 8.25pm tonight. He can also be seen hosting Channel 4's "The Feel Good Factor" on Tuesday at 8pm

arts & books

Where angels fear to tread

He'll never play the chisel-jawed leading man but Alan Cumming has a misfit's charm, a sideline in writing, an Olivier... and the gall to accept a big part in the new Spice Girls film. By Jasper Rees

Alan Cumming's entry in *Spotlight*, the actor's almanac, says he is 5ft 10in, has dark hair and blue eyes. This summer, he filmed a two-minute scene in the Stanley Kubrick movie *Eyes Wide Shut*, in which he plays a hotel clerk who forms an instant crush on Tom Cruise. As he gazed for three days on Cruise's ironically cheesy face, Cumming may as well have been lustng after a blurred mirror image of himself. Same-colour hair and eyes, same-size grin and (contrary to rumours circulating about Cruise's need for stock heels) roughly the same height. These are classic leading-man specifications, and yet the only leading man Cumming has ever played is in *Hamlet*, a play about a man who doesn't want the lead role.

Instead, Cumming is perpetually the geek, the nerd, the pout, the flop. Anything but the straight-up-and-down hunk. Last year, after making successful Hollywood-financed films over here such as *Circle of Friends* and *Emma*, he got the call to make two movies in LA. Producers over there had his number in no time. In *Romy and Michele's High School Reunion*, which opened here this week, he plays a nerd millionaire with a crush on Lisa Kudrow, whose only moment of machismo comes in a wish-fulfilling dream sequence. Having got him to voice the horse in *Black Beauty*, the writer-director Caroline Thompson then asked him back to play a trainer of chimpanzees in *Buddy*. The script was adapted by Thompson from a book by Gertrude Lintz about bringing up a gorilla among chimps, and the film also stars Renée Russo and Robbie Coltrane. Training chimps sounds close to perfect casting; there is something about Cumming's impishness that is next to chimpanessiness.

"I'm always going to play weird people," he says. "But that's fine. When I read scripts I always find the part of the lead man dull, dull." Thus in *For My Baby*, an arthouse film shot in Hungary last winter, he plays a stand-up comedian and son of Holocaust survivors who is in denial about his Jewishness. This winter, he goes to Broadway with the director Sam Mendes to reprise his saturnine MC in *Cabaret*, a three-year-old Christmas hit in the

Donmar Warehouse. (Natasha Richardson will play Sally Bowles.) Lately, a script even landed on his desk fingering him for the part of Hitler.

Clearly, casting directors have taken his Bond villain – he played the dastardly Russian computer whiz in *Goldeneye* – as something of a handrail. "I can't tell you the number of films I've got offered after that to play computer geeks." But just about the only people who have spotted any consistency in his role selection are the manufacturers of the headpieces worn by telephone operatives. He wore one in *Goldeneye*, and another in the BBC's *Burn Your Phone*. His picture has found its way into their trade magazine. "They think I'm just fantastic, because every film I'm in wear their product."

Last, and possibly least in his gallery of misfits (though let's reserve judgement), he has slapped on a chest wig to a post maker of documentaries in *Spice: The Movie*.



Other actors might have shrunk from this particular offer, but not Cumming: "I knew that my agent might be a bit sniffy about it so I just told them, 'If I'm offered it, I'm definitely going to do it; don't even try to dissuade me.'" (Brief tangent: when Cumming learnt that Ginger Spice had seen his *Hamlet*, he all but got a T-shirt printed to announce the fact.)

It would be easy to deduce from *Spice* and other sugary ventures that Cumming has simply gone for

the commercial jugular. "Sometimes I do things for the money," he admits, "but I know why I'm doing them. I don't think something is *Citizen Kane* when it's not." But it's not always easy to square his frank pursuit of the dollar with the scepticism that formed a large part of the baggage he took to Hollywood. He talks with the bairnment of someone brought up in the remote Scottish country-side about the ritualistic comportment of film folk: the my-Winnebago's-bigger-than-yours syndrome, the power trips of certain co-stars, the inventory of on-set perks on his contract. "Rental car, mobile phone, trailer with a fridge, CD, microwave oven. It's like someone's doing their wedding list or something."

In the too-frank-to-publish journal he kept of his nine months in Hollywood, those things he found "bizarre and hilarious" in the first couple of months "weren't even mentioned as I went on because I was so used to them. The longer I stayed there, the more depressing I found it, because I can see how you get sucked in. You yearn for a conversation about something other than box-office grosses." After *Romy and Michele* opened, "I got all these phone calls saying, 'Hey, congratulations, your movie took seven and a half million on the first weekend.' Or was it nine and a half? Who gives a fuck?" The darker and more complex *Buddy*, meanwhile, has fared "very badly". There's no justice in that respect. If you spend too long in that world, you start thinking that films that make lots of money are good."

In the beginning, Alan Cumming made his name in stand-up. He formed Victor & Barry with the shorter, caricature Forbes Masson, and in their Edinburgh Festival debut they were trashed in *The Scotsman* by none other than this newspaper's editor, Andrew Marr. They sewed a retort into the act to the tune of "Lucky Stars": "We can thank you, Andrew Marr, that you're not as smart as you like to think you are."

The Cumming-Masson liaison eventually came up with *The High Life*, the sitcom about in-flight cabin attendants that wrote themselves. Its audience was ambivalent about its merits, but then so were its stars. "Some people really love it – it's scary how much – or they hate it. I think that's good. We wanted to call it *A Load of Camp Old Piss*. We really wanted to do something that was really tacky, and the people who were making it with us just didn't get it. The hand-hanging-against-the-wall part of trying to do something different and weird with the sitcom form is something that I would never want to repeat."

The BBC have none the less pressed for a second series, while showing a red light to dramas by Sharman MacDonald and Ol Parker that Cumming was signed up to make. "My agent phoned up to see about them and they said, 'Maybe, if he does another series of *The High Life*, it would be more likely that they'd go ahead.' Isn't that revolting?"

Alongside the cabaret, Cumming swiftly built up a name in formal theatre but, since his kid Hamlet and his camp MC, he has given the boards a wide berth. "When I came back from Hollywood, I really tried to do a play, but I haven't found anything I like enough to do here. When you've played Hamlet and the MC, there are very few roles that are going to be a challenge." It may be that he's not looking hard enough, but at least he can fall back on his auxiliary talent as a writer. When he takes what could be seen as a retrograde step into *Cabaret*, he will continue in New York to workshop a one-

Behind on points: failing to find Diaghilev	6
Looking for the clues to Conan Doyle	7
Paperbacks	8
Choice: twentysomething writers	8



Alan Cumming: geek, creep, nerd, Hollywood veteran (above), and below, as a cyber-whiz in 'Goldeneye'

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

man show "about loneliness" that he spent last week developing at the National Theatre Studio.

Actually, it's not quite true to say he hasn't been on stage in years. He gets asked to hand out a lot of awards. "They are never there, the people I give them to. They say to you, 'And so, Alan, will you take it and keep it for them until you see them?'" And you think, fuck, I've never met them in my life before, and you go, "Yes, I'll hold on to it." I was so tempted to steal a Bafta. I walked off the stage and no one takes it off you and I thought I could go to my dressing-room and just put this in my bag. Imagine having a Bafta on your mantelpiece and you'd stolen it."

He hasn't been on the receiving end of an award since his Olivier for *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* at the National. *Buddy*, though bringing a rare taste of box-office rejection, has none the less earned him trophies he can display at home. The film required him to get to know the quartet of chimps whose keeper he played in the film. "It was like I was a nanny for four kids for a few months. One of them was absolutely in love with me: Tonka, as in the trucks. When they really like you, they want to groom you, and they want to play with you. He would pick up my hand and hit my hand on his head so that then he could be justified in hitting me so we could start playing. I felt so flattered. I even took my chimp Polaroids in to show Stanley and Tom [Kubrick and Cruise, in case you're wondering]. Tonka is also an artist. His keeper faxed some of his work to Cumming's hotel in Budapest. "And I've got two paintings that he did in my bedroom." And is he talented? "He shows a lot of potential."

Romy and Michele's High School Reunion is on general release

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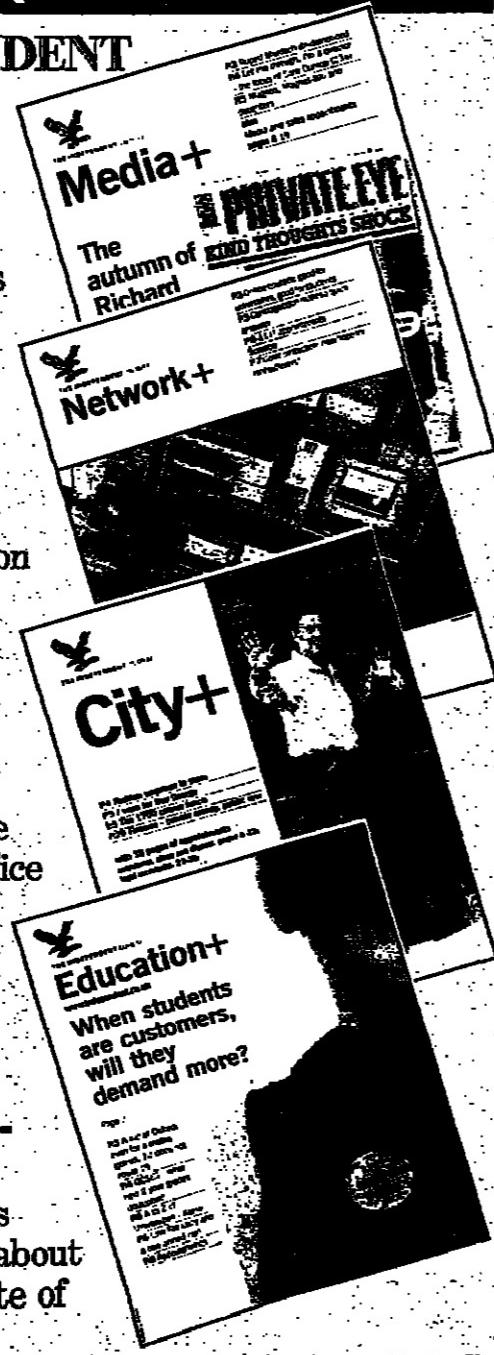
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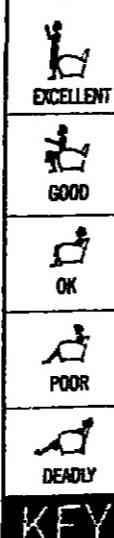
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WEEK IN REVIEW

By Adam Buxton

critical view overview



THE FILM Lost Highway

Directed by David Lynch from a script cowritten with Barry Gifford. This inexplicable conjunction of *film noir* set-pieces stars Patricia Arquette as both a gangster's wife and the murdered wife of a saxophonist; Bill Pullman as the convicted musician and Balthazar Getty as a mechanic who takes his place on death row and is subsequently released, only to fall in love with the adventurous wife of a gangster...

Adam Mars-Jones was enthralled by a Möbius strip of mystifying narrative, a story with two sides but a single surface. But *Lost Highway* was troubled by the poor metaphysics: 'Time and space are bent out of shape; one character merges into another ... the lines connecting cause and effect are impossibly skewed'. *The Guardian* offered a judicious recommendation: 'As watchable as any movie he has ever made', while *The Mirror* mused: 'More *Lapsang Souchong* than PG Tips, David Lynch isn't everyone's cup of tea.'

At cinemas nationwide

THE PLAY Massage

Steven Berkoff writes, directs and stars in a play exploring the sexual hypocrisy of the British, the fragmentation of domestic and social life and the 'delightful' institution of the massage parlour. Berkoff drags up as a disaffected wife turned masseuse on the quiet, Barry Phillips plays her embittered husband – who happens to frequent massage parlours – and an assortment of other customers...

Sue Wilson observed a 'marked departure from Berkoff's trademark intensity'. *The Telegraph* lamented a truly terrible show, while *The Times* tried to avoid the spectacle of Berkoff dragging up grotesquely to the nines like the panto dame he may yet end up being'. *The Evening Standard* enjoyed it more: 'He totters around, twisting his heavily made-up features into a pornographic mask and miming the manipulation of impossibly large members in the air'.

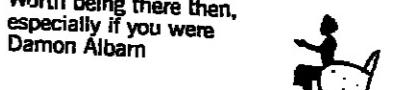
Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh (0131-226 2428) to 30 Aug

For the headliners of V97, last weekend was a real homecoming, and not just in Chelmsford. For the first time Blur took their new material to a wide British audience – first Essex, then Leeds. In a week where the music media hyper-ventilated over Oasis, this was a pointed demonstration of how good pop music can be.

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On tour in November and December. Damon Albarn will appear in a radio version of Joe Orton's 'Up Against It' on 15 Sept and in Antonia Bird's film 'Face' next month

Worth being there then, especially if you were Damon Albarn

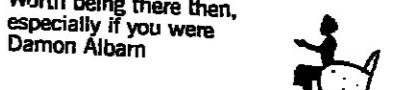


THE GIG Blur

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Chill in LSD

Inaction man

Chris Darke celebrates the ambiguous on-screen persona of Alain Delon, French cinema's most impassive star

As the French film journal *Cahiers du cinéma* pointed out in a lengthy interview with Alain Delon published last April, the actor's surname is an anagram of *le don* – "the gift". And the gift that set Delon apart during the Sixties is now once again on display, thanks to the re-release of René Clément's 1960 film *Plein Soleil*. An adaptation of Patricia Highsmith's novel *The Talented Mr Ripley*, in which Delon plays the seductively sociopathic anti-hero, *Plein Soleil* was Delon's breakthrough film. Before it, he had been identified, along with Jean-Paul Belmondo, as an up-and-coming *jeune premier* (leading man) of the French cinema and, in his early career, he had adorned a number of lightweight romantic comedies. In the same year as *Plein Soleil* appeared, Belmondo went on to shoot *A bout de souffle* with Jean-Luc Godard and found himself transformed into an *acteur-fliche* of the French New Wave. Delon would never be as directly associated with that explosive moment of cinematic creativity as Belmondo, but with *Plein Soleil* his international career was assured. Clément's film revealed Delon in his coldly angelic prime, capturing that quality of ambiguity that was to define the actor's persona for the rest of his career and that so admirably suited this Highsmith adaptation.

The novel's hero, Tom Ripley, has been entrusted with the task of bringing Philippe Greenleaf (Maurice Ronet), the errant son of a wealthy American father, back home from Italy. Moving between Rome and the Amalfi coast, the action opens with Ripley impressing Greenleaf with his talent for forging signatures. It's a skill that grows into a fully fledged and deadly imposture: Ripley murders Greenleaf and assumes his identity. His intention is to harvest the dead man's wealth as well as his girlfriend, Marge (Marie Laforêt).

Delon plays Ripley as a purely reflexive schemer, shading his character so that the desired outcome of Ripley's subterfuge – easy access to the idle-rich lifestyle – seems only slightly less important than acquitting himself elegantly in the game of deceit. But there's an ugly edge here, too. It's something hinted at by the American critic Donald Lyons, who wrote that the film "posits, in a coyly Nietzschean way, the right of beauty to legislate its own existence". And if that includes rubbing out

a few of the less beautiful people, then so be it. *Beauté oblige*.

There's also a sense in which, in his rapacious concentration on his star, Clément seems almost to be endorsing this quasi-fascistic identification with Ripley the *übermensch*. Perhaps that explains why, at the end of the film, Delon gets his comeuppance, whereas Highsmith's novel lets Ripley get away with it.

In many ways, *Plein Soleil* reads like a documentary about Delon, both a beady observation of a gifted screen animal and a closely choreographed ballet of dissimulating gestures and movements. Delon here has a physical presence and dynamism that are compelling to watch; it respect the film is a study of on-screen grace.

Throughout his career, Delon remained unshaken in his praise of Clément, calling him "his master". He has described how Clément directed him on *Plein Soleil*: "He showed me the sea and said, 'Go on, throw yourself about. Move!' He manipulated me like a marionette." But, beneath the athleticism of his performance, there is a stillness, a watchfulness that make Delon's Ripley an enigma.

This combination would be reprised throughout his career, frequently under the guidance of major *auteur* puppet-masters. There would be his association with Visconti on *Rocco and His Brothers* (1960) and *The Leopard* (1963); with Antonioni on *The Eclipse* (1962), where Delon's pertulant dynamism is at odds with the usual anguish of the Italian director's male characters; with Joseph Losey on *The Assassination of Trotsky* (1972) and *Mr Klein* (1976); above all, with the great French thriller director Jean-Pierre Melville.

Delon made three films with Melville, including the seminal *Le Samouraï* of 1967, in which Delon's performance as the hired killer Jeff Costello attains an almost Zen-like stillness. Both *Plein Soleil* and *Le Samouraï* are "procedural" films, in that they are both obsessed with the preparation and execution of crimes, but Melville abstracted all but the most glacial element of Delon's menace and did so to tremendous iconic effect.

Delon's quality of tough-guy stillness is often summed up by the short-hand description "laconic" – for which read "Say little, do less". And it's true that he shares qualities with both Robert Mitchum and John Garfield (Delon has spoken of Garfield as "his model") as well as with

a more immediate peer in Jean-Louis Trintignant – always more an "actor" than a "star" in France but still distinguishing himself in the same territory of cold-eyed misanthropy.

Delon's persona has been crystallised by well-publicised associations that have played up the element of menace in his on-screen performances. In 1969 he was implicated in a drugs scandal and admitted to having been involved with the Marseille mafia whose past he mythologised (alongside Belmondo) in the hugely successful historical crime caper *Borsalino* (1970). Then there's his background seen as "myth" – those details of a past that stars will deliberately emphasise to enhance their image. Delon's is an interesting one. "I fell into cinema," he has said. He'd been a parachutist in Indo-China at the age of 18, trained as a boxer for *Rocco and His Brothers*, remains a vocal friend of the Gaulist right-wing and makes no secret of his admiration for the military. It's this mixture of individualist and adventurer, with a strong authoritarian streak, that he capitalised upon throughout the 1970s in a series of frequently self-produced cop films.

Plein Soleil is not normally considered as a New Wave film. In fact, Clément himself was regarded by the New Wave as a prime exponent of "*le cinéma de papa*", a derisive epithet for the 1950s style of French movie-making, with its devotion to the virtues of solid craftsmanship and literary source texts. It was against this perceivedly moribund establishment that the New Wavers declared Oedipal war. Yet it was clear that, with *Plein Soleil*, Clément wanted in. This may have been the reflex of a director smart enough to notice the tide turning and deciding to surf the new currents. But in his use of cinematographer Henri Decaë, who shot Truffaut's 1959 break-through film *Les Quatre Cents Coups*, and of Paul Gégauff, Claude Chabrol's script collaborator, as his co-screenwriter, Clément declared his desire to be part of the new French cinema. And, in casting Delon, who was still something of a new face at the time, he found his equivalent to Belmondo.

While Clément's film has none of the freewheeling, experimental joy that the New Wave directors demonstrated, there's a kind of kinship between the characters of Belmondo's Michel Poicard in Godard's *A bout de souffle* and Delon's Ripley in *Plein Soleil*. Both are early Sixties

images of young men on the make who are prepared to go all the way to get what they want. Both films are intrigued by the existential consequences of this will-to-power and both, in the traditional French *noir* scheme of things, have their anti-heroes pay for their ambitions. Henri Decaë's Eastmancolor cinematography gives Clément's film a texture that, viewed today, is as immersively colourful as a 1960s picture postcard. Fakery, again. A simulacrum without shadow, the perfect frame in which to claustrophobically depict a criminal at work.

Delon's career since his Sixties heyday

has looked increasingly like a balancing

act between maintaining his status as mainstream *vedette* and continuing to diversify with appearances in *auteur* films. An attempt at a Hollywood career in the mid-1960s yielded unspectacular results and his European career founded in the 1980s. An attempt at a comeback with the 1992 film *Le Retour de Casanova* (The Return of Casanova), in which Delon starred as the ageing Italian roué, failed to attract audiences on the strength of his name alone. Curiously enough, it was Delon's long-awaited collaboration with a former New Wave director, Jean-Luc Godard, in *Nouvelle Vague* (1990) that gives the best account of late-period Delon. And Go-

dard, as is his habit, quotes freely from *Plein Soleil* in his own film's motif of death by drowning and in Delon's character of an ambiguous interloper among a group of wealthy business people.

"I wanted to film Delon as if he was a tree," Godard has explained. The commanding stillness of the Delon persona is still on view in *Nouvelle Vague* but is layered now with melancholy and the sense of a man internally exiled through his own narcissism.

Plein Soleil is now showing in London at the Screen on the Green (0171-226 3520), the Everyman (0171-433 1525) and the Curzon Phoenix (0171-369 1721)



Alain Delon in his 'coldly angelic prime' as the seductively sociopathic hero of 'Plein Soleil'

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL REVIEWS

Opera Ariadne auf Naxos

"**L**e's hope the opera nonsense doesn't get bashed up," exclaims M Jourdain, Molière's bourgeois anti-hero, as a performance of Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* is planned.

Scottish Opera has chosen to stage the original 1912 version of this amazing piece, which is thus preceded by *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, performed by actors in a free translation – free is the word – by Jeremy Sams. This form of the work has seldom been seen; the difficulty of assembling two companies, drama and opera, for its performance led Strauss and Hofmannsthal to revise it in 1916, removing the Molière play, and that is the version we all know.

To hear the original is a revelation. Its chief feature is the greater integration of comic and serious, representation and "real life", vulgarity and sophistication. Sams's racy translation of the play stressed this. Suddenly one finds that the work has the irony, the levels of meaning, the mixture of art and life one expects in a Mahler symphony.

The new production is witty and lavish, full of clever sight-gags and elaborate props. Martin Duncan, the director, and Tim Hatley, the designer, have set it in more-or-less modern times, though the operatic characters are in white-classical and the *commedia* figures are a cross between minstrel show and cabaret. The illusion of an expensive drawing-room gives way gradually to a baroque stage, full of painted clouds and dry ice.

The piece has one outstanding problem, which may have encouraged its revision. It is too long. Sams even puts in a bit of repartee about the composer being "a surgeon, who makes cuts for the health of the whole body". Well, he is right; it needs to be an hour shorter.

But it certainly deserves to be seen. As well as real comic actors – Sam Kelly is a droll Jourdain – there is an ideal cast of singers, including a real Zerbini. This is one of the hardest roles to cast in all opera, for it has spine-tickling coloratura, sympathy and

pathos, and it needs a dancer and comedian as well. Lisa Saffer has everything, and also looks terrific. She almost steals the show from the Ariadne, Anne Evans, who sings heroically, sculpturally, transplanting her famous Bayreuth Brünnhilde into the role.

The adroit integration of comedy and epic is chiefly accomplished by the conducting of Richard Armstrong. He animates without hurrying, broadens without dragging,

Dance San Francisco Ballet

The Playhouse audience was practically steaming with excitement before the curtain went up on San Francisco Ballet on Tuesday. They haven't danced in Britain since 1981 and 16 years is a long time in a company's life. Many changes have been wrought in the interim.

San Francisco's ballet com-

pany was founded in 1933 and is the oldest professional ballet outfit in the US. It has had its ups and downs – artistically and financially – but in 1985 the former New York City Ballet principal Helgi Tomasson took over as artistic director. Since then they have enjoyed rave reviews for their strong technique and wide and handsome repertoire. Unfortunately, the works selected to showcase the company in Edinburgh did not always do his achievements justice.

Of the two programmes on offer the first, with its two *Ballachines*, was by far the more popular and (for once) box-office instincts proved to be correct. It opened with the 1972 Stravinsky *Violin Concerto*. The many jumps are dashed off with so little fuss and preparation that the dancers seem to have been jerked from the floor by a length of elastic. The evening closed with

1947's *Symphony in C*, which provoked the usual squeak of excitement when the audience got its first glimpse of 10 shimmering white tutus. Further thrills were generated by Yuan Yuan Tan in the adagio. Remarkable extensions and commanding balances contributed to a brilliant (if slightly inexpressive) performance.

The stale filling in this gourmet sandwich was Helgi Tomasson's *Sonata*, danced to Rachmaninov's soulful Sonata

certo for Piano, Trumpet and Strings. Binyon's theme is too big for him but his treatment of it never crass. He draws a parallel between the grassy nature of flesh and the short life of the professional dancer. At the ballet's close Death takes a class and the dancers struggle to copy his swift *enchainements* before dropping to the floor.

The second programme's highlight was Mark Morris's *Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes*, created for American Ballet Theatre in 1988 and danced to Virgil Thomson's *Piano Etudes*. Morris's easy, unrolling turns and casually brilliant jets are a sunny manifestation of the fractured gaiety of the music. The stage is filled with couples propelled by a curious sense of purpose – as if every rush across the stage is a short-cut to a better place. The San Francisco dancers handled Mark Morris very well but they were obviously just visiting; with Balanchine, they seemed more comfortable at home.

Louise Levene

Theatre Blue Heart

Blue Kettle, the second part of Caryl Churchill's dazzlingly theatrical double bill *Blue Heart*, must be the first play to use Enid Blyton's *The Faraway Tree* as a reference point. Derek, a 40-year-old man who is coming a series of susceptible women into believing they are his mother, visits his real mother in a geriatric ward. In the middle of this beautifully tender scene, he remembers his favourite childhood book, in which every time some children climbed a magic tree they visited a different land. It was a world bursting with delights and surprises, doubts and terrors, hopes and dreams.

Churchill's dramatic world is similarly full of possibilities. Unlike Blyton, however, her bold range is created via a supremely confident use of language and a poignant theatrical vocabulary. The form of the two interlocked plays is startlingly sophisticated yet leaves you wondering why no one has tried something so simple before. In *Hearts' Desire*, a father, mother and aunt are waiting for a daughter to arrive home after years in Australia. It's like a

rapid dramatic version of the parlour game Consequences, with the characters constantly cutting back to the beginning and then supplying wildly different endings. At first you think you're in for a reinvention of Ionesco-style comic absurdity as the family indulge in soap opera argy bargy, but things turn increasingly surreal. One minute the audience is rocking with laughter at the sudden plunge into Agatha Christie – "It's nothing to do with any of us except that the body was found in our garden" – the next minute you're shocked into silence as the beautifully baleful Mary Macleod, as the elderly Maisie, chillingly reveals the terror of waking up in the night afraid of dying.

The second half refracts and dislocates language in exactly the same way the first part does to action. A tiny shock jumps through the audience as Jason Watkins, as Derek, appears to trip over a word, substituting "blue" for "start". Then the word "kettle" crops up unannounced. Gradually, these two words creep in and consume the dialogue to the point of almost complete breakdown.

These dramatic devices could be dismissed as a typically barren exercise in deconstruction were it not for the fact that Churchill uses them to such extraordinary emotional effect. The more "blue" and "kettle" crowd speeches the more we are pulled into seeing the depth of the character's feelings and the links between them and Churchill's governing themes.

Anna Wing is almost unbearably moving as the fiercely pragmatic 80-year-old blue stocking who remains unable to express

emotion when meeting the man she believes to be her long lost child. Her performance is symptomatic of Max Stafford-Clark's scrupulous direction, which rivets every single moment to its emotional truth. His splendidly meticulous production is the perfect foil to the formal experimentation. Whether you're laughing at the sheer unabashed imagination of Churchill's vision or being caught short by its powerful emotional undertone, you realise that she has pulled off an exceedingly rare coup: she forces you to see that form and content are indivisible. In a climate where most playwrights think that structure and plot are the same thing and that compassion is a dirty word, watching *Blue Heart* is a captivating, heady pleasure.

Traverse Theatre, to 30 Aug. David Benedict

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Lies, damned lies and statistics

Adrian Furnham wonders when science became journalism

Vital Lies, Simple Truths: the psychology of self-deception by Daniel Goleman, Bloomsbury, £16.99
Mind Reading: an investigation into how we learn to love and lie by Sanjida O'Connell, Heinemann, £16.99

Superficially, these books have something in common. Both are written by science journalists who here display rather more skill in the latter activity than the former. Both, misleadingly, have "lies" in the title and both aim to explain to the lay reader complicated semi-technical ideas in the social sciences. But neither succeeds in doing what Hawking and Penrose did for physics or Dawkins for biology.

Vital Lies, Simple Truths is written by the same author as last year's best-seller *Emotional Intelligence*. Is this book a rushed sequel? Alas, I am churlish enough to believe it is a prequel. There are 15 pages of references, but none goes beyond 1984. Lots of articles and unpublished papers are referenced around 1981-83, but nothing later. Did science

stop in Orwell's 1984? Does this matter? Yes – vitally, as it turns out. A question absolutely central to the theme of the book, concerning false memory or "recovered memory syndrome", blew up in the early Nineties – but is not discussed at all. The accusation of sexual abuse in childhood by adult children against parents is the current issue around "vital lies", but this book mentions nothing about it.

Vital Lies puts its thesis like this: "The mind can protect itself against anxiety by dimming awareness. This mechanism creates a blind spot: a zone of blocked attention and self-deception. Such blind spots occur at each major level of behaviour from the psychological to the social".

Each of the six parts mixes scientific experiment and human-interest story: an excellent formula for popularity, as the previous book showed. This makes it easy to dip into, but does not help coherence.

Goleman moves confidently from one research area to another, from neuro-

psychology through psychoanalysis to micro-sociology. The concept of "trade-off" litters the first half. He argues that there is a trade-off between attention and anxiety: we do not attend to stimuli of all sorts that provoke too much anxiety.

Taking us briskly through the cognitive psychology of the late Seventies, Goleman emphasises that perception is certainly not complete and may not be "conscious". Without knowing it, we scan, filter and select information. We see what we want to see.

The book then gets rather more clinical as it considers selective memory and that old Freudian chestnut, repression. "The ego, as Uncle Sigmund pointed out 100 years ago, is a great censor which controls and distorts information. We are all essentially self-deceivers. But now we have more scientific proof of the fact."

The last section becomes sociological.

We move from the individual to group (family and organisation), remembering

and forgetting. Curiously, three sound bites in the concluding section tell us that personal blind spots may indeed be vital lies because they have survival value. In the face of unpalatable truths, it is fairly natural to try a little self-deception.

O'Connell's key phrase is Theory of Mind (ToM) – the ability to read other people, to understand their emotions, beliefs and expectations, and hence to predict their behaviour. Problems with ToM have been suggested as the underlying cause of the deeply debilitating psychological illnesses of autism and schizophrenia.

The author is a television producer and ex-primateologist who worked on chimpanzees; she has also written a novel called *Theory of Mind*. (There are in fact more references to chimpanzees than to children in her book.) O'Connell writes well and paces the work smartly. But the book has some of the problems of television science presentation; it jumps around too much. Chapters are incoherent and there are a number of inaccuracies in the reporting of empirical work. (I checked this out with two colleagues cited by O'Connell, and they independently said the same thing.)

Once again, we have a straightforward theme which is threaded through a disparate literature. If you don't understand novels or plays, it's because you can't understand motives or intentions. Without a ToM, you can't empathise. Equally, the better your ToM, the better you can lie, cheat and love!

But the theme is too dissipated, because the issue – empathy – is itself too big. The topic is sold well for the lay reader, but with too much generalisation and emphasis on peripheral, if interesting, studies that seem to confirm the thesis. It's all too inductive trying to infer general laws and universal truths on the basis of a gamut of experimental results, personal observations and good stories.

Do I have a ToM about O'Connell's motives for writing the book? Money, fame, narcissism? The author is clearly committed to her topic, but the trouble with people who get really excited by scientific concepts is that they find the concept can miraculously explain just about everything. And that is the point at which science becomes journalism.

A heavyweight who always won on pointes

Picasso, Stravinsky, Nijinsky: they all danced to the great impresario's tune. Michael Church searches for his secret

Speaking of Diaghilev by John Drummond, Faber, £20

Diaghilev died in 1929. In 1967 John Drummond persuaded 22 Ballets Russes survivors to speak about him on film. Thirty years on, Drummond has transcribed their interviews for a book, which thus represents a double time-warp. It begins oddly, with a series of swipes at long-dead BBC colleagues who failed to appreciate Drummond's youthful genius, and with an astonishingly personal attack on the dance critic Richard Buckle, his adviser for the film.

Buckle is the author of what is generally regarded as the definitive Diaghilev biography. This Drummond condemns as containing too much fact and "too little judgment". He acknowledges the scale of the Diaghilev industry, but justifies this new contribution to it by claiming that key questions have yet to be posed.

Diaghilev was the supreme collector and shaper of talents, enthusing Picasso and Cocteau and presenting to the world Stravinsky and Satie, Benois and Bakst, plus a host of dancers. Wagner may have been the first exponent of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* – the fusion of music, drama, and spectacle – but what this Russian impresario did with music, dance, and visual art was no less original. After much buffing and puffing about "the nature of authority", Drummond's unposed questions boil down to one simple one: how did he do it?

Of course we'd like to know, but most of us have long assumed we never shall. Art is mysterious, and collaborative creation particularly so. In a letter to his stepmother, Diaghilev himself acknowledged the mystery: "I am, first, a great charlatan, though with dash; second a great charmer, third cheeky, fourth a person with a lot of logic and few principles, and fifth, someone afflicted, it seems, with a complete absence of talent." Setting aside that last defect – which referred to his failure as a composer – his self-diagnosis is still the best to date.

Can Drummond do better? To be frank – and his pre-emptive arrogance demands nothing less – the answer is no. *Speaking of Diaghilev* leaves the mystery virginally intact.

But there are still nuggets to be mined from these unedited conversations, provided you overlook the ploddingly unctuous questions which punctuate the text. Provided, also, that you don't mind being told endlessly about Diaghilev's grey suits, gliding gait, frightening aloofness and fear of water, and the enormous size of his head.

Some descriptions are evocative. His laugh was "like thunder, rolling around"; his handshake was so soft that "you seemed to disappear into it". That's the book to get hold of.

When, surrounded by acolytes, he made his entrance into a restaurant, "it was like a ship entering a harbour, with little ships around him". For Karsavina he had the lazy grace of a sea-lion. For Cecil Beaton he had a mouth like a shark, and "a marvellous porcine complexion".

We gather a lot about the control he exerted over his company by alternating cruelty and kindness. We get some sense of his magic ability to seem boundlessly rich, while possessing little more than the clothes he stood up in.

Every so often, an anecdote illuminates a work. Serge Lifar's *Prodigal Son* was so effective because it coincided with the errant dancer's private reconciliation with his master. Sokolova's description of what it felt like to dance *L'après-midi d'un faune* – "pushing your hands forward from the wrist" – speaks volumes.

We learn from the composer Igor Markevitch how deeply Diaghilev immersed himself in the scores he commissioned. His interventions were so forceful that Markevitch found it "very difficult to know exactly who was the creator". The composer Nicholas Nabokov speaks of his infallible musical intuition, and gets closer than anyone else to identifying the quality of risk which infused everything Diaghilev did. This, says Nabokov, derived from the fact that "he was perhaps the first grand homosexual who asserted himself and was accepted as such by society".

But *Speaking of Diaghilev* is really three books, not one. The second recounts Drummond's pursuit of his sacred monsters and their fascinating reactions to him. Some screw him for every penny they can; some become his devoted friends; some deliver monumental snubs, which he reports in masochistic detail.

The third book, in the form of an extended afterward, is the least satisfactory, being the autobiography of a balletomane who is also one of the most powerful arts grandes in Britain. Drummond is properly contemptuous of what passed these days for innovation, and shows why Diaghilev would not have been happy running the Royal Ballet. But he also has scores to settle and alliances to cement, and seems incapable of disentangling these from the serious points he wants to make about the condition of dance today. Did this book not have an editor?

Between a literary amateur like Drummond, who lets it all hang out, and a professional like Richard Buckle, who keeps his eye on the ball, there is no comparison. *Speaking of Diaghilev* is a patchy and querulous postscript to Buckle's magnificent *Diaghilev* (Weidenfeld, £14.99, and still in print).

That's the book to get hold of.



The thriving swan: Anna Pavlova, who danced for Diaghilev's 'Ballet Russes'

PHOTOGRAPH: MANDER AND MITCHENSON

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
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A WEEK IN BOOKS

BOYD TONKIN

In their bare-faced heyday, the Thatchers used to claim that competition – however stiff – would always have a tonic, not a toxic, impact on rival traders. Does the same apply to books? Within a matter of weeks, the massed biographers of Jane Austen will learn the hard truth as Maggie McKernan, David Nokes and Claire Tomalin all add their new lives of Jane to the pile begun a few months ago by Valerie Grosvenor Myer. This triple whammy only goes to show that, for all the doomy talk about hard-faced hatchet-persons in power suits, there's still a lot more sensibility than sense in publishing today.

Biographies – especially of writers – seem peculiarly prone to this bus-stop effect. You wait for a couple of decades, and then two, three or (in George Eliot's case) four all come along more or less at once. Why should this happen? On one side, TV and film adaptations, expanding reprint lists and the ever-grinding education industry do successfully carry the classics to fresh cohorts of readers. On the other, older "standard" works start to feel musty and remote as the culture changes – most notably, in the direction of sexual frankness – and research uncovers the sort of evidence to turn yesterday's angel into tomorrow's demon (or even vice versa). And, of course, death loosens the tongues of foes as well as friend – although Samuel Beckett emerged as lovable as ever from James Knowlson's and Antony Cronin's recent lives.

If biographers must cluster, better to tread rapidly on one another's toes, as the Janeites will. That at least permits a fair comparison. When one life steals a march on its peers, it becomes almost impossible for the stragglers(s) to capture the same territory on review pages and bookstore tables. There's little wrong with Stephen Coote's and Keith Aldritt's assured new biographies of WB Yeats (from Hodder and John Murray, respectively) beyond the cruel fact that the first part of Roy Foster's epic authorised version broke the tape back in January.

In the spring, we reviewed (at some length) Jon Lee Anderson's biography of Che Guevara, shot in the Bolivian jungle 30 years ago. This autumn, should Jorge Castañeda's equally substantial tome – which draws on a broader spread of sceptical and hostile sources – command the same level of coverage for the bushy icon? If not, what about Henry Ryan's study of the urban guerrilla, due in early 1998? When exactly should we draw a line and say "That's Enough Che (Ed)"?

These snarl-ups and tailbacks do prove that publishers often have precious little grasp of one another's plans. This is not (yet) a planned economy. For the moment, literary sleuths will go on shadowing their rivals' paths like characters from some opaque yarn by Henry James.

Two distinguished contributors to these pages are working on lives of the same revered figure in post-war European literature. They have visited the same sites, consulted the same archives, sought memories from the same frail relatives. They haunt each other as their tragic and heroic quarry haunts them. Yet, so far, they have never met. And probably they never will, until their jackets touch on bookshop shelves.

Go gentle into that good night

Jonathan Sale enjoys a final date with 29.4.20

Any programmes on radio, he knows how words sound in your ear and mind. Any celebrities threatening to write *My Life as Host of Pets Win Supermarket Lotteries* should be beaten about the cranium with *Mind How You Go* until they have mastered at least some of the Blishen skills.

Admittedly, earlier books had more action. He was for 12 years at the mercy of schoolchildren and for five thrown around by the

fortunes of war – or, in his case, of pacifism. In this terminal volume, he is tossed about by the whims of hospitals and, among other parts of the body, by his bladder. So many doctors ask for his date of birth to pop into their forms that he becomes a perpetual birthday boy: "I was rapidly slipping into being 29.4.20."

This contrasts with the medical facilities on offer during his childhood. His mother used to take

him to sniff the local gasometer, a process which she fondly believed to have therapeutic qualities. Since Edward's baby brother died following a misdiagnosis, her medical knowledge was less convincing than what the hospitals of the pre-Welfare State days had to offer.

As that suggests, Blishen juggles memories of childhood and old age, recollections of seven with 70. His friends turn up as

boys and as senior citizens. He is here tying up loose ends and balancing his books. Without in any way being maudlin or self-pitying, it is his way of going gentle into the good night.

This is not to say that the guilty go free. In an unexpectedly hilarious episode – his wife breaks a leg on a Tenerife holiday – he describes the private clinic from hell, so anxious to hang on to patients' fees that the elderly

couple practically have to dig their way out. *Last Of The Summer Wine* meets *The Wooden Horse*. Who would have thought that anyone could make his own cataract operation, and bladder and bowel probes, quite so entertaining?

As a broadcaster, Blishen belonged to the pre-Dalek, pre-digital era. Now he has gone to the Great Studio in the Sky, where the knobs are not twiddled by irrational accountants and where any executive using the words "producer choice" is shoved into the burning fiery pit below. He leaves us this 250-page last will and testament, as if to say "... and to my readers, I bequeath a few final memories." R.I.P.

Mind How You Go by Edward Blishen, Constable, £16.95

The good news for all readers who enjoyed *A Kackhanded War, Uncommon Entrance* and other autobiographical volumes by Edward Blishen: here is another volume. The bad news could be deduced from Blishen's obituaries earlier this year: "It's his last. It ends with the words: 'You might die,' and indeed he did. Yet he remained a real pro to the last. His manuscript was completed just before the arrival of the undertakers. And the prose, though written against the clock (or scythe), is just as polished and witty as before.

As presenter of countless liter-

150



Basil Rathbone (Sherlock Holmes) and Nigel Bruce (Dr Watson) in MGM's 1939 'Hound of the Baskervilles'

RONALD GRANT ARCHIVE

Eminent Victorian

Gabriel Josipovici locates a sage in his time

Errata: an examined life by George Steiner, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £11.99

George Steiner's criticism has always striven for grand impersonality, but what has made it interesting has been precisely the flavour it conveys of barely concealed personality. At the end of an essay by Steiner, one's tendency is not to say how true! but how does he manage to know so much, to write with such panache? Now, at last, he has produced a book in which he promises to speak of those things that have made him who and what he is.

The first chapters do not disappoint. They take one from his early childhood in Austria to his brief sojourn in France and on to the French Lycée in Manhattan and the University of Chicago. In a marvellous section he describes how his father coaxed him into reading Homer in Greek and left him with an abiding passion for the classics of Western civilisation. A banker by necessity, he was, according to his son, the epitome of the cultured Viennese Jew. "His learning was extensive and exact ... Investment banking occupied most of his outward existence. At the core, it left him almost indifferent. From this tension came his uncompromising resolve that his son should know next to nothing of his father's profession ... I was to be a teacher and a thorough scholar."

Yet Steiner is half aware that this has been, for him, a mixed blessing. "The cost of this early incision of the classical into my existence has been considerable," he says, and comes back to it at the close, when meditating on the state of our culture at the end of the millennium. I am not sure, though, if he quite realises the degree to which the early influence of his remarkable father has made him what he is, and how even his unease with his inheritance is itself so clearly the mark of one imbued in the culture of 19th-century Germany and Austria.

There is, first of all, the need to inform and persuade, the passion of the teacher, which has always been an integral part of Steiner's writing. I could have done with less of it here, since after the fascinating chapters on his youth and education he ceases to talk about his own life and



Viennese world: George Steiner, champion of the classics and The Classic, in full flight. PHOTOGRAPH: TOM TILSTON

his rootlessness, in his trilingualism and his sense of being between at least three cultures. But his sense of musical history, too, is culturally specific. It would have been shared by Schoenberg and Wiegstein and Adorno, but not, say, by Stravinsky or Berio or Birtwistle. This history has its apex in Beethoven and Brahms, not in Ockeghem or African drumming.

Steiner blames his education, with its stress on the worship of the classics and The Classic, for not having allowed him to grasp fully what has been happening in our time. "It is the ebbing of ideals and performative hierarchies instrumental since the pre-Socratics, which define what I have called 'the epilogue' but which

others acclaim as 'the new age'. There is too much I have grasped too late in the day. Too often my activity as a writer and teacher, as a critic and scholar, has been, consciously or not, an in memoriam, a curatorium of remembrance."

What Steiner does not seem to see is that this very plausibility, this apocalyptic note, is itself typical of German culture of the late bourgeois period. He could have been quoting from Wittgenstein's *Culture and Value* or Thomas Mann's *Dr Faustus*.

But does the contrast have to be between Brahms and rock, between a profound love of the 19th century and an irresponsible embracing of chaos? Much of the finest art of our century has in fact simply sidestepped the terms in which such a debate has been conducted among those steeped in Germanic culture. There is a combination of lightness and depth in Stravinsky, an elemental quality about Birtwistle or Henry Moore, which owes little to the 19th century and yet is far from the crudities of pop culture or the cynical knowingness of post-modernism. Steiner ignores this and goes on asking his large and serious, his very Germanic questions. How can culture and barbarism coexist? Where are we going? And so on.

Towards the end a strange tone surfaces, as Steiner returns again and again to the assertion that he has not achieved the recognition he deserves and that his work has been consistently plagiarised. At the same time, sometimes in the same sentence, he manages to hint at how immensely successful he has been. How can he doubt that the latter is the truth?

He is widely regarded as the foremost cultural critic of his day. And yet his sense of having been betrayed – by his country and city of adoption, by his former pupils – is also very Viennese-Jewish: it is to be found on almost every page of Schoenberg's letters.

But then so is the generosity of spirit which shines through much of this book – the simple enthusiasm for great achievements in whatever field, the warmth of his homage to those who made him what he is. And that is the true George Steiner, though I suppose it is in the nature of things that he should not always be aware of this as his readers.

From diagnosis to deduction

How did a stolid medic invent modern crime fiction? P D James looks for clues

The Doctor, the Detective and Arthur Conan Doyle by Martin Booth, Hodder & Stoughton, £20

being the victim of charlatans. At the end of his life he forfeited money, goodwill and admiration by his belief in fairies, taken in by a photograph which was little more than a child's hoax.

It was a full and interesting life, well lived, but it is doubtful whether either his virtues or his eccentricities would have justified this or previous biographies were it not for his creation of a single fictional character, Sherlock Holmes. This is not a judgement which would have afforded satisfaction to Conan Doyle. In placing this achievement in relation to the author's life, Martin Booth has had to rely on previously published records and material, since for some decades biographers have been denied access to Conan Doyle's private papers.

Given this prohibition it would be unreasonable to expect new insights and fresh discoveries. Booth has written a conscientious and comprehensive account of his subject's life from the material available; if we wish to find our way to the essential man, we need look little further than his work.

Sherlock Holmes could be said to have been born on 8 March 1886 when Conan Doyle began writing a novella. It was first entitled *A Tangled Skein*, later changed to *A Study in Scarlet*: "the scarlet thread of murder running through the colourless skein of life". The novella, initially rejected by a number of publishers, was finally sold outright to Ward Lock for £25. It was an unpropitious appearance of the first major serial character in British fiction, and one who, through his author's astonishing success, was fundamentally to influence the direction of the modern detective story.

But for an educated man, particularly a doctor, he was curiously naive, even gullible. He came to his belief in spiritualism, the passion of his later years, after careful weighing of the evidence, but that did not prevent him

an immediate success, the first issue selling over 300,000 copies. Editorial policy dictated an illustration on every page and the Sherlock Holmes stories were allocated their own artist, Sidney Paget, whose vivid line drawings perfectly complemented the character, and whose illustrations are still the definitive picture of Sherlock Holmes.

The stories were sensational popular. Queues formed at newsstands on publication day, and Sherlock Holmes quickly became what he remains today: a household name.

The success of the Sherlock Holmes stories is not difficult to explain. They were exciting, dramatic and suspenseful. The two main characters, Holmes and Dr Watson, were contrasting individuals with whom the readers could identify. And in Holmes, Conan Doyle had created the archetypal hero who was nevertheless a true original; brilliantly clever, courageous, eccentric, physically compelling, and the possessor "of the most perfect reasoning and observing machine the world has ever seen".

The plots of the Holmes stories are ingenious but hardly credible. And Conan Doyle was careless about details. The dog that didn't bark in the night is mysterious, but less so than Dr Watson's dog, which disappeared completely. Inspector Lestrade changes his appearance dramatically between *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. The chronology is sometimes confused, parts of London are inaccurately described, and the writing is occasionally slapdash.

None of this worried either Conan Doyle or his readers. A modern crime writer could wish that readers today were so accommodating. As the author wrote of the short stories: "Accuracy of detail matters little. I have never striven for it and have made some bad mistakes in consequence. What matters is that I hold my readers." He did hold them, and he does so still.

The one that got away

Dea Birkett goes fishing with an evergreen grande dame

The Nine Lives of Naomi Mitchison by Jenni Calder, Virago, £20

What is it about Naomi Mitchison? There seems so much meat in her chameleonsocialist life for a good, gutsy biography, pointing to her roots in the Fabianism and feminism of the first half of this century. But, like a female Laurens van der Post, Mitchison has attracted unquestioning awe rather than analysis. When she celebrates her 100th birthday in November, she should be thankful that for a century the critical hounds have been kept at bay.

In the first full account of her life, biographer Jill Benton confessed she was a "passionate student" of Naomi's, "bent on honouring the lives of those accomplished women writers short-changed by literary history" – on which list, of course, Mitchison was high. In Jenni Calder, the Scottish matriarch has another biographer who is also neither detective nor detractor but a devoted disciple. From the outset, Calder clearly draws the line between her subject and us ordinary mortals. "For Naomi Mitchison living has meant not existing, enduring, putting up with, compromising". For her, life has been "adventuring, protesting, galvanising others".

Naomi Mitchison's life is a testament to unbounded energy. She has written more than 80 books, as well as plays, poems, and articles. Her first novel, *The Conquered*, was reputedly drafted on a board resting on her son's pram as she pushed him along the Embankment. She had five surviving children by her patient husband, Dick. She collected lovers as other upper-middle-class women collect fine china. She fought for contraception, nuclear disarmament and fishermen's rights.

In her forties, she bought Carradale House on the Mull of Kintyre and became laird of a Scottish village; in her sixties, she became the "mother" of a Botswana tribe. Botswana confidently asserts



Burned in this hagiography, there is a tiny clue to another Naomi Mitchison, in a throwaway remark made by one of her children. She has never known her mother to go for a walk on her own. Above all, it seems, Naomi Mitchison – an irrepressible "I" – has wanted to be part of a "we".

Forster's belief that ownership was "the wickedest thing in the universe", Naomi went to Sotheby's and Christie's to buy furniture for her new home. On this, Calder offers no comment.

But Calder's biggest blind spot is in refusing to question Mitchison's claim to be embraced by classes and cultures other than her own. At Carradale, according to Calder, the new laird immediately fell in with the local fishermen. Her evidence for this comes from Mitchison's own poetry, but was this truth masked as fiction, or simply wishful thinking?

In the early Eighties, I wrote to the laird of Carradale asking if I might visit. Like Benton and Calder, I wanted to meet a woman I admired. She invited me for the weekend, and I pitched my one-woman tent in her substantial grounds. During my stay, an expedition was organised to go salmon fishing. We were all issued with wellingtons and waterproofs and told to rendezvous at the back door. Naomi Mitchison, several members of her huge family and myself tramped down to the beach. We stood by while three local fishermen went out in their boat, trawled their net, caught a fish, and brought it back to the shore, where they bludgeoned it to death at their laird's feet. We all walked back to the Big House. Not even the tips of my wellingtons were wet. The next evening we ate the salmon at the grand table, congratulating ourselves on our fine catch. In the Eighties, people still dressed for dinner at Carradale. "Did you enjoy salmon fishing?" someone asked. No one seemed to be aware of the irony.

Such details are not dwelt upon by Calder. She outlines Mitchison's unfailingly successful attempts to be part of communities to which she is a natural outsider. This member of the distinguished Haldane family is said to have blended in beautifully with life at a village in Botswana: "She was soon one of them, a Mokgata, and the 'we' of all her writing about her African identity."

Burned in this hagiography, there is a tiny clue to another Naomi Mitchison, in a throwaway remark made by one of her children. She has never known her mother to go for a walk on her own. Above all, it seems, Naomi Mitchison – an irrepressible "I" – has wanted to be part of a "we".

PAPERBACKS



by Christopher Hirst
and Emma Hagestadt

Demonic Males by Richard Wrangham and Dale Peterson (Bloomsbury, £17.99) This enthralling investigation into the "vicious, lethal aggression" endemic in human males begins with a devastating comparison of Rwandan genocide with butchery in chimpanzee communities. The parallels are described as "unsettling", particularly in light of the discovery that chimpanzees are more closely related to humans than to gorillas. The authors convincingly argue against determinism but appear optimistic in their insistence that the acquisition of wisdom can "draw us away from the five-million year stain of our ape past".

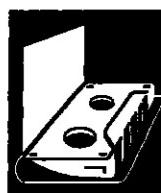
Inventing the Abbotts by Sue Miller (Indigo, £5.99) Best known for her novel *The Good Mother*, Sue Miller continues to explore the perils of single-motherhood in her short stories – sex with a new partner while the baby snoozes being one of her favoured themes. In one story a 37-year-old mother inadvisably gets out erotic snapshots of her younger, more nubile self to show to a new lover, while in "Expensive Gifts", a woman who begins the night in bed with an unfamiliar man ends it snuggled up to her two-year-old son. In this titillating, readable collection, only the book's title story, about two brothers' obsession with a family of sisters, fails to pack a punch.

Racing Pigs and Giant Marrows by Harry Pearson (Abacus, £5.99) Like the naughty boy in every class, Pearson can't stop cracking jokes. This account of 25 North Country shows, ranging from the Appleby Horse Fair to the Egton Gooseberry Fair, is packed with gags. Fortunately, they're very good ones, such as the way that a crab sandwich, left in Tupperware for an hour, produces "the nauseating stench of a Russian factory ship becalmed in the Indian ocean with a faulty refrigeration system". This book is a joy and a treasure.

In the Garden of Desire by Wendy Maltz and Susie Boss (Bantam, £9.99) In this survey of the sexual fantasies of more than 100 American women, one of the participants remarks: "Fantasies don't fart, suffer exhaustion or leave balled-up socks on the floor." Unlike their male counterparts, female fantasies tend to be complex narratives: "I imagine I'm a meditation student using a secluded ashram in the woods..." Six common fantasy roles include Victim, Dominatrix and Voyeur. As the authors note, "We don't have to like fantasy for it to provide a positive function."

Portofino by Frank Schaeffer (Black Swan, £6.99) Eyes fixed on his three slices of tuna, three slices of salami, four olives and round of mortadella, young Calvin Becker prays that the rest of the *pensione* won't notice his mother saying grace. Just one of the countless embarrassing moments recalled in Schaeffer's semi-autobiographical novel remembering Sixties holidays on the Italian Riviera with his American missionary parents. A novel that glows with sentiment and cheap red wine.

AUDIOBOOKS



I am made uneasy by any form of writing which cannot readily be spoken aloud", says Laurie Lee in "True Adventures of a Boy Reader", the first of the stories that make up *I Can't Stay Long* (Isis, 2hrs 30mins, £3.99). He was, he explains, the inheritor of an oral tradition of language – "a vocabulary small though naturally virile, the words ancient, round and warm to the tongue." How he discovered the "power and glory, persuasive magic and ready gift of hallucination" of books, and moved from Defoe, Bunyan and Swift to the moderns, explains the genesis of his sturdy romantic style. Appropriately, his own voice redoubles its charm.

The lifting alliteration of J.R.R. Tolkien's translation of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (HarperCollins, 2hrs 30mins, £8.99) makes no easy task for the reader, but Terry Jones, a medievalist as well as an actor, tackles it gamely.

Christina Hardymont

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A regular guy, lost in love's labyrinth

Penelope Lively follows a gifted yarn-spinner into the masculine maze

Larry's Party by Carol Shields, Fourth Estate, £16.99

Carol Shields has always been a wonderful manipulator of structure in her fiction. She plays around with the conventions of linear narrative and then delivers some arresting brew of her own. *The Stone Diaries* served up a whole range of evidence about the life of its protagonist. *Happening* sliced a marriage and gave the wife's point of view, and then the husband's. *Mary Swann* – a particular favourite with me – hid its dead woman poet behind the obsessive manoeuvrings of her admirers, jugged with evidence again and even supplied persuasive poetry somewhere after Emily Dickinson.

Shields also has a corner in esoteric occupations thoroughly researched. By the end of *Happening*, you knew a lot of interesting stuff about quilt-making. *The Republic of Love* filled you in on

mermaid mythology. The hero of *Larry's Party*, true to form, is a designer of garden mazes and the story of his life is told in a way that is circular and circumstantial, linear only in the sense that it homes in on him at carefully selected moments.

What all this amounts to is that Carol Shields has thought far more intently than most novelists about this tricky, seminal and often betraying matter of the selection of evidence. Why tell the reader this rather than that? Her fiction is a cunning tapestry of judiciously chosen threads. You won't see the pattern until the very last moment, when you stand back and look.

Larry's Party ends with just that: the party at which the various elements of his life are brought together for a triumphant dénouement. "What's it like being a man these days?" someone asks: a flip, dinner-party remark which then prompts some heartfelt, alcoholic comment and also serves as the focus of the entire novel.

This is a book about what it is like to be a man at this point in time – or rather, to be a Canadian floral designer (who thinks that he may be, just probably, a little banal) as interpreted by a shrewd woman novelist.

Larry Weller was not particularly bright at school. His reflections on his own possible banality arise when he first comes across the word, at a time when he is obsessed with the fact that he is semantically deprived – "the empty white echo he sometimes hears can be calmed by words". When he left school, his mother enquired about a course in furnace repair but the local college sent the brochure on floral arts by mistake: a nice conjunction of happenstance and linguistic confusion.

Larry is not banal, in the sense that no one is. He could be seen as ordinary – he has no particular distinction of mind, no great powers of perception – but in the hands of his sympathetic creator he

becomes a kind of archetype. He is decent, striving and perplexed. This perplexity lies at the heart of things and informs his erratic progress through two marriages and a further relationship until the final watershed. He moves from his first love, sprightly Dorrie, to Beth, herself something of an archetype: a self-absorbed Eighties woman writing a doctoral thesis on women saints (a quintessential Shields touch, that), who quotes Donne in bed. Women dominate the book, even if it is a man's story – and very properly so, since the questions of gender and the shifting balance between the sexes are the matters at issue.

There are no easy answers here; this is not prescriptive writing. Larry's story is not offered as some salutary tale of what happened to Western men in the last quarter of the 20th century but rather as a reflection of how one such may have perceived his problems. And a convincing account it is too, quite blowing apart

that rigid notion that women cannot write of men (or vice versa, for that matter). Through Larry's eyes and by way of his experience we sample all the daileiness of existence alongside the significant themes in his life: the moment when he walks out on his first marriage, his feelings for his son, his unexpected advance as a fashionable designer of mazes for wealthy patrons.

The concept of the maze features prominently – both symbolic (perhaps a bit heavily so) and practical. Early on Larry goes through some sort of mystical experience in the Hampton Court maze. This came across as somewhat baffling, but I suppose that mystical events are just that. At any rate, the moment disposes him and acts also as a directive. From then on, maze theory will become an obsession, powering the twists and loops of Larry's progress and lending an idiosyncratic spin to this clever and beguiling novel.



Mary Ellen Mark's spine-chilling picture of a snake charmer with his son, outside Delhi (1981), comes from 'India: a Celebration of Independence', edited by Victor Anant (Aperture, £35), a panoramic survey of the nation by great photographers, from Cartier-Bresson to Salgado

The regeneration game

INDEPENDENT CHOICE

Laurence O'Toole scans BritLit for a wicked hit



Pick of the week

Are You Experienced?
by William Sutcliffe

pleasure, or from writing in a style which reflects the experiences of her characters. In recent times, the fusion of new leisure technologies – drugs, dance, music, computers and videogames – has had a considerable influence on the shape of British art, fashion and advertising, as well as on the popular fiction of writers such as Alan Warner, Bridget O'Connor and Stewart Home, with their varied experiments in non-linear narrative forms.

Such disapproval prevents Kays from conveying the thrill or euphoria of

Cargo of despair

Fraser Harrison takes the Middle Passage and laments man's inhumanity to man

Feeding the Ghosts by Fred D'Aguilar, Chatto & Windus, £14.99

Zong as it plies the middle passage between West Africa and Jamaica. The captain decides to protect his healthy cargo by slinging overboard the infected "pieces". In this way he plans to halt the disease, save rations and preserve a profitable ratio of the ship's "holdings".

He is confident he will recover the value of his losses from the insurers back in London. He orders his crew to throw overboard 132 pieces of "stock" – men, women and children plucked out of the hold and marked as strokes in his meticulous register before being namelessly dropped into the sea and the void of history.

One of the slaves, Mintah – condemned to death for insolence rather than infirmity – manages to climb back on board. With the help of the cook's assistant she not only stays alive to lead an abortive rebellion, but finds pen and paper and writes a journal of these dreadful events.

This document is produced in court when the suit for compensation is heard. Among other things, it reveals that one of the allegedly sick children had to be chased round the deck before she was caught and dumped in the waves. "Where is the necessity in the decision to dispose of her?" asks the lawyer for the insurers.

Fred D'Aguilar's third novel is derived from a true case, given much uncomfortable publicity by Granville Sharp, first chairman of the Quaker Society for the abolition of slavery. D'Aguilar convincingly conjures up the appalling conditions in which newly captured slaves were imprisoned during their voyage to the West Indies. None of the white characters uses the word "slaves"; they are invariably referred to as "stock". D'Aguilar further reinforces their loss of individuality by differentiating only Mintah.

The others are never more than anonymous pairs of eyes staring out of the fetid darkness in the hold. Their atrocious situa-

tion is mostly suggested by means of the crewmen's disgust at having to go below. There is a telling moment, as forceful as any account of rape or beating, when the first mate's lamp is nearly extinguished by lack of oxygen in the women's section. This is truly imaginative historical fiction.

The first part of the novel is more concerned with the slaves than with the slaves. It seems to be asking the age-old question: how can humans do this to each other? The white men are individualised, but only in so far as they vary in their reactions to the captain's orders. Some grumble a little, but all obey in the end.

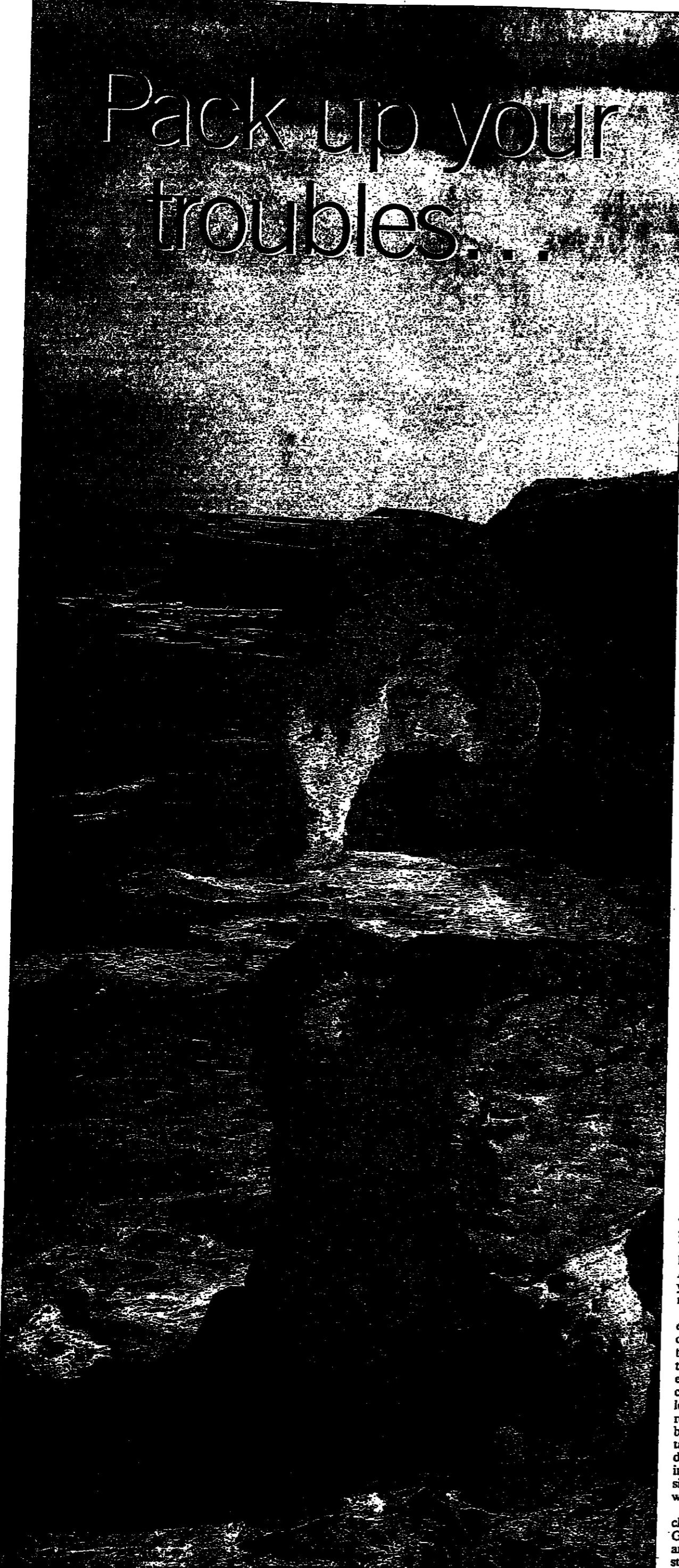
The only man who shows compassion is the assistant cook, and he is a simpleton. The very fact that the slave trade flourished for so many years proves that our 18th-century ancestors, like those responsible for the Holocaust, behaved as D'Aguilar suggests: with unconcerned cruelty. Perhaps such people do not deserve deeper inspection. On the other hand, to dismiss them as sadists and buffoons is surely a mistake.

D'Aguilar depicts the judge in the insurance case, Lord Mansfield, as a man fonder of lunch than of justice who never recognises the barbarity of the case. The fact that this cartoon is unrepresentative of the historical Lord Mansfield does not matter, but what makes slavery and other atrocities the harder to understand is that they are not committed only by brutes, but by intelligent and cultivated people as well. Their mentality does therefore need to be explained.

The humanity of Mintah is set against the men's callousness, and if she occasionally seems too heroic and literary to be entirely credible, she is nonetheless a moving creation. D'Aguilar invests her with a poetic grain in herself as a kind of wood, whose grain will grow round the terrible knot of the voyage, allowing her to survive, her soul intact. The wood of her being is contrasted with the rapacity and indifference of the sea. And, his eloquence in full flight, D'Aguilar implies that there is always a Zong at sea somewhere.

travel & outdoors

Pack up your troubles.



Anatomy of Antrim: on a scale for scenery, this shoreline would score higher than anywhere else in the UK

President Clinton doesn't want you to go on holiday. OK: that's an exaggeration. What the world's most powerful man wants to stop you doing is going on holiday to Cuba.

There are two main reasons why you might decide to book a trip to Cuba. The first is the opportunity to visit the last sensible bastion of socialism, a nation that has survived for nearly 40 years under the guidance (or should that be "thumb") of Fidel Castro, the world's longest-serving political leader. The second is that the Caribbean's largest island has some splendid beaches and decent rum, and happens to be stupidly cheap at the moment. But whichever reason applies, Mr Clinton has placed all sorts of obstacles between you and Havana.

Britain's travellers are caught up in the economic war being waged by the United States against what it says is an oppressive and undemocratic regime. There are, of course, many oppressive and undemocratic regimes in the world, but the only one that Washington makes a fuss about us visiting is Cuba.

You might imagine that the British should be able to travel without outside interference. But the tentacles of Mr Clinton's economic embargo extend so deep that Britain's biggest tour operator, Thomson, has withdrawn its holidays in Cuba for fear that its directors would be denied permission to travel to the US (one of the consequences of "trading with the enemy"). Plenty of other tour operators continue to offer holidays in

Cuba, but a leading chain of British travel agencies is set to stop selling them.

The imminent takeover by the US company Carlson of the tour operator Inspirations will mean that all branches of the travel agent AT Mays become American-owned. As soon as the deal goes through, AT Mays will stop selling Cuba.

Independent agents and operators will continue to risk the wrath of the White House by selling holidays in Cuba, and independent-minded travellers will continue to buy them. Should you book a seat from Gatwick to Havana on the Cuban national airline, you will find the aircraft used will be a DC-10 - manufactured in Long Beach, California. Mr Clinton's embargo must be alarmingly leaky if it allows a plane that size through the net.



Simon Calder

"Discussing the black market with clients was a no-win situation, rather like discussing sex with teenagers"



Tessellation row: the Giant's Causeway is Antrim's biggest drawcard

PHOTOGRAPHS: CHRISTOPHER HILL

Far beyond Belfast's tensions lies one of the world's most spectacular coastlines – as Simon Calder discovers on a trip along the edge of Antrim

One hundred degrees? The thermometer may have climbed that high where you were this week, but on the coast of County Antrim the temperature stayed well within two Fahrenheit figures. Were there a scale for scenery, though, this shoreline would surely score higher than anywhere else in the kingdom. Two of the UK's most stunning pieces of coastal scenery are separated by seven miles. And between them lies an absurdly beautiful beach.

Yet this tableau is but the denouement of a story which begins much further south and west along the shore.

World travellers think they can list great coastal drives at the drop of a place name: Highway One in California, the Great Ocean Road in the Australian state of Victoria ... They should add the A2 from Larne to Cushendall. For 25 miles the road crouches between the land and the shore, leading you past a succession of scenes. First, ungainly suburbia: next, standard-issue, ultra-green Irish farmland; then brutal cliffs, through which the road occasionally drills. (Punctuating this tale of majesty, though, is a series of ragged urban settlements for which the clichés "quaint" and "charming" can remain safely stowed in the thesaurus.)

Not that the residents aren't friendly, mind. You know the sorts of organisations where a house rule insists that the phone is answered within four rings? The Northern Ireland Tourist Board appears to have a similar policy to help tourists. If any visitor enters a pub alone, one of the locals is obliged strike up a conversation within 10 seconds. I tested this on three occasions this week, and it worked every time.

Soak up the stout with a helping of dulse – dried, salted seaweed which some locals believe deserves to be as ubiquitous as potato crisps. When you track some down by following one of the signs beside the A2 advertising "Dulse, 100 yards", you find out why it isn't: the taste resembles spinach-flavoured Selloppate.

Cushendall represents the end of the easy ride along the coast; no highway could be cut in the cliffs north of here. Prettier and more concise than other towns on the coast, Cushendall is the best base for exploring the Nine Glens of Antrim that carve up the nearby countryside. Each valley has been chiselled out of the ancient rock by a river; some are fearsomely steep, but the A2 follows the path of least resistance along broad Glencore. At Cushendun, you could continue gently along the inland route. Be tempted, though, by the signposted "Scenic route via Carrick-a-Rede", which lives up to its promise.

In a series of switchbacks, the road claws along the coast, reaching 650ft at Green Hill (a fellow cyclist I met had amended his map to replace the understated word "Hill" with something much more graphic). Apart from the odd wheezing cyclist, you feel quite cut off from the

rest of the world. The only visible company is the dark, brooding shape of the Mull of Kintyre, 13 miles away across the North Channel. You start humming the tune, and by the following day are still doing so (and cursing Sir Paul McCartney for his anthem to the Scottish peninsula).

Ballycastle, where normal life resumes, is a bit of a boom town this summer. The old ferry link to Campbeltown, abandoned around the time Paul McCartney had a Christmas No 1 with his dirge, has been reinstated. Never mind that the vessel that the Argyl & Antrim Steam Packet Co is using, *MV Claymore*, has enjoyed many better days: the route opens up all sorts of possibilities for travellers wanting to make a circuit of Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The town remains endearingly unaffected by the attention: the garden of the house three doors along from my hostel featured an old bidet in place of a plant pot. Most of the new arrivals turn right out of the harbour, and start climbing the cliffs to the west. Five miles out, at the apex of a hairpin bend, a sign points towards Carrick-a-Rede, which translates from the Gaelic as

The island degenerates into the sea after a couple of hundred yards along the footpath, but from it you can survey its stout sibling, Sheep Island, and gasp at the scale of the shoreline (or is that in trepidation at the prospect of the return journey?).

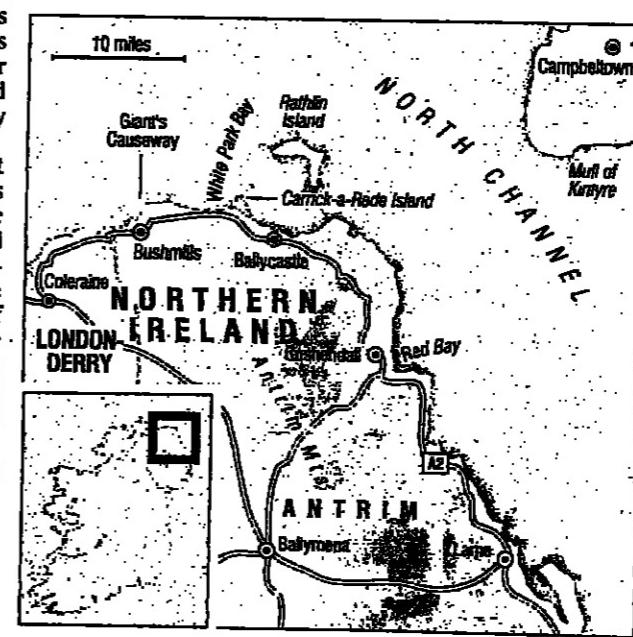
Assuming you make it, continue along to another National Trust treasure: White Park Bay. Were you to design the perfect beach from scratch, it would look a lot like this: a mile-long arc of blanched sand, sheltering between two mighty headlands. What makes White Park Bay special is what's absent: no buildings beyond a couple of handsome houses, and no people – presumably because this is Antrim, not Antigua.

No other island can boast Antrim's final phenomenon: the Giant's Causeway. As bees will testify, nature adores a hexagon. For geological and geometric proof, take the trail down from the coast road to a sight for which, like all real wonders, no photograph can prepare you. An ancient volcanic eruption somehow crystallised into a chorus of hexagonal columns, each a subtly different height. They tessellate together to form a broad promenade into the sea. You find yourself drawn to the codas, shiny with spray, and turn to face the exquisite detail of the causeway against a magnificently barren backdrop. At dusk, you find yourself alone, yet again.

To go from this to surveying number plates might sound eccentric. But I wanted to find out whence the few visitors that there were had come. So for the hour's cycle ride home, I counted. German tourists were tops, followed by French and Dutch. Not one vehicle, though, from England, Wales or Scotland.

One reason for three-quarters of the United Kingdom perversely avoiding a spectacular coast was summed up on the road sign announcing truthfully: "Antrim's Coast – an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty". Someone had spray-painted the initials of the Ulster Volunteer Force over the sign, and an accomplice had plastered "Victory at Drumcree" in large blue capitals across the width of the road. But not once this week did the coastline feel like a front line.

Simon Calder paid £27 to sail from Larne to Larne aboard P&O's *Jellifer* (01224 572615). He returned from Ballycastle to Campbeltown on the Argyl & Antrim Steam Packet, the *Claymore*, fare £23 (0345 523523). He stayed at Kathleen Quinn's bed and breakfast at Stranore in Cushendall (012667 71610) for £15 a night, and paid £6 a night for a bed at the Castle Hostel by the harbour in Ballycastle (012657 62337). More information: Northern Ireland Tourist Board, St Anne's Court, 59 North Street, Belfast BT1, NIB (01232 231221). No map is necessary for the stretch between Larne and Cushendall (just stick to the A2), but beyond that sheet five of the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland 1:50,000 series is recommended.



"road in the rock". Follow the signs to see why the rock juts out into the sea like a bulky semi-colon, separated from the shore by a narrow channel (the "road") hewn through sheer cliffs.

The average visitor comes here for a cheap thrill. The channel is crossed by a terrifying rope walkway, agitated by even a benevolent breeze. Two at a time, tourists teeter across the 20 yard divide. Those with unkind travelling companions are instructed to pause halfway across to pose for the camera. Dogs, a sign helpfully warns, are banned – any hound would certainly tumble through the worryingly open spaces between the ropes and the plank, along which a petrified Japanese girl is stumbling. Seabirds circle and heckle, while waves emphasise the rocks 200 feet below by repeatedly smashing against them.

The great thing about Carrick-a-Rede is that you are drawn here for the crack, but stumble across a splendid vista of seascape.

exchange bureaux and banks. And, of course, Sterling is strong all over the former communist world."

Given American sensitivities, I shall not name the individual who suggested that the best black-market anywhere involves smuggling Havana cigars into the US, where aficionados will pay a fortune for the real thing.

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Trouble spots

Around Africa

Kenya: "The Department of State recommends that American citizens avoid travel to the coastal province of Kenya, including the city of Mombasa and its suburbs. On August 13, a group apparently bent on exploiting ethnic tensions attacked a police station near Mombasa and seized weapons. On August 16 and 17, sporadic mob violence was reported on Mombasa's north and south coasts. Residents and visitors in the Mombasa area are urged to take the highest security precautions" - US State Department Travel Advisory.

"Failure to observe the following points of Kenyan etiquette can get you arrested or put you in a position where you may be obliged to pay a bribe. Stand, in cinemas and on other occasions when the national anthem is playing. Stand still when the national flag is being raised or lowered in your field of view. Never tear up a banknote of any denomination. And don't urinate in public" - *Rough Guide to Kenya*.

Ethiopia: There have been a number of indiscriminate bomb and grenade attacks in public places, including restaurants and hotels in Addis Ababa, Dira Dawa and Harar in recent months. Avoid travel to the Somali region, Southern Bale and south eastern areas - Foreign Office travel advice unit. Call 0171-238 4503 for more information.

Rio - the winner

Hundreds of readers entered our competition to win a week's holiday in Brazil and Rio de Janeiro. The prize, offered by the Latin American travel experts Journey Latin America and the airline company Transbrasil, includes a stay in the north-eastern city of Salvador, then on to Rio.

The answers: the national football stadium is the Maracana; Christ the Redeemer is on the Corcovado; the dance is the samba.

And the winner is: Diane Greenwood, whose tie-break entry was: "If I were to win this competition I'd fly to Rio with ... everything I possess."



Since independence, Zimbabwe has boomed as a clean, green example of beneficial tourism, says Simon Calder

Few eyes are brighter, few smiles broader, few minds sharper than those belonging to the dozens of Zimbabwean children who sweep every visitor along to their school in a tidal wave of jollity. The openness, generosity and sheer good humour of life in an African village such as Mahenye should persuade you to postpone your departure from it as long as you can. But when you finally retreat to your safari lodge, you can sleep soundly knowing that the proceeds from one shore in every 10 are destined for the local community.

When the new country first began to promote itself in the early Eighties, the slogan used was "Welcome to Zimbabwe - now in its 150 millionth year". No matter that the name of the nation had existed for barely 12 months; Zimbabwe set out to equate itself with nature. The ads implied that the tourist, besides being privileged to share in an ancient, unspoilt land, was doing the place a favour. The now much-copied concept of eco-tourism was born.

Since then, a lead-free, politically correct, environmentally sensitive travel bandwagon has been rolling across the world. Travel companies realise that the image of caring about the effect of tourism can pay off, for their shareholders as well as for us stakeholders in the future of

the planet. But when any big corporation begins to brag about its green credentials, I tend to urge a good helping of scepticism.

So when a large hotel enterprise like Zimbabwe Sun begins to develop a region close to the Mozambique frontier, you have to ask a lot of questions about the likely winners and losers. But, having been a tourist there myself, and having talked to everyone, from the chambermaid to the leaders of the community, the project seems to represent an excellent example of how sustainable tourism development can work - and an exciting model for any community thinking of starting along the road towards reaping the uncertain rewards of tourism.

For the past 30 years, the area around the Save (pronounced san-say) river has been our bounds to foreigners. Initially the reason was insurrection within white-ruled Rhodesia; then, after the country became Zimbabwe, the war in Mozambique required tourists to be kept away. As a result, when the conflict ended, the region was left with a cleaner sheet, as far as travellers are concerned, than almost anywhere else outside obscure regions of the former USSR.

Compared with most of the ex-Soviet Union, the great advantage that south-eastern Zimbabwe possesses is extraordinary natural beauty.

Nothing dramatic, mind: the landscape gives the impression of having been there for ever, gradually and comfortably worn down by the millennia. From the mud that has slumped in the Lowveld, slender trees accelerate above the gentle scrub towards a sky whose intense blue shrieks at the onlooker.

For a room at the Mahenye lodge, you pay a surprisingly modest £50 per night. The local community claims 10 per cent of this, with a guaranteed minimum of 250,000 Zimbabwe dollars (£13,500). After 10 years, community leaders can elect to close down the operation or lease it to someone else.

To gauge how much the scheme is working, just visit the local school and meet Lyson Masango. He will explain how, in 10 years, the school's roll has increased from 50 to 700. Knowing that one-tenth of your spending is contributing to the education of the village can tempt you to over-indulgence; one more Castle beer could help buy another schoolbook. That kind of logic could be dangerous.

Mr Masango is also chairman of the local wildlife committee. What, you may ask, about the wildlife? Are they destined to become objects of voyeurism in the manner of animals elsewhere in Africa, barely distinguishable from beasts confined to zoos?

Not if the walking safari I joined was anything to go by. We spent four hours looking not at impala and elephants, but at their dung. The guide demonstrates, in an impressively inspirational manner, how animal excreta can tell you much about the ecology of the wilderness.

The point of walking wasn't just to get closer to nature (in all its glories). I wanted to tread lightly on this miraculous country, which has never known the tyre tracks of the eco-tourism bandwagon. By the end, I realised that nothing is bigger than an African sky, nothing is noisier than an African silence, and nothing is more fragile than the balance between land, wildlife and man.

Simon Calder travelled to Zimbabwe for BBC-2's The Travel Show. Air Zimbabwe (0171-491 0099) and British Airways (0345 222111) fly between London, Gatwick and Harare. Official fares are high - a minimum of £725 return on Air Zimbabwe. But if you can travel on September 9 and 29, and return before the end of November, you pay only £425. This ticket is on sale from next Tuesday. To reach Mahenye from Harare involves a drive of around six hours; you can travel on a series of buses, but this is likely to be a long process. The Mahenye Safari Lodge can be contacted on 00263 313159.

Simon Calder and friends - whose education is largely funded through the clever exploitation of tourists

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Blenheim Palace - a fantastic display of 18th-century intellect, wit and pleasure
PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN LAWRENCE



DAYS OUT

Monumental, it may be, but Blenheim Palace is a paradise for children too, writes Catherine Stebbings

Marlborough country

Blenheim Palace, the seat of the Duke of Marlborough, is one of England's most imposing stately homes. The massive house was built by a grateful nation for John Churchill, who became a national hero and the 1st Duke after his defeat of the French at Blenheim, in Bavaria, in 1704.

It was also the birthplace of Winston Churchill – and although he never lived here he is buried in Bladon, on the edge of the estate.

The vast classical palace, with its sprawling symmetry, majestic colonnades and imposing Corinthian portico, is typical of the work of the architect and playwright, Sir John Vanbrugh. Blenheim is a fantastic display of 18th-century intellect, wit and pleasure.

The monumental mansion exudes grandeur, opulence and power, but its sheer size makes it uninhabitable.

Inside, Blenheim has it all: architectural details include work by Hawksmoor and Grinling Gibbons, murals and ceilings painted by Laguerre. Paintings include works by Rubens, Van Dyck and Sir Joshua Reynolds, and there are vast cabinets of Meissen and Sévres, and sculptures by Rysbrack, Epstein and Coysevox.

Outside, a number of formal gardens with fountains, ponds and neatly clipped hedges elegantly separate the house from "Capability" Brown's landscaped park.

An arboretum, including a rose garden, hides many rare and interesting species.

The former kitchen garden, now known as the Pleasure

Gardens, offers many activities, particularly for younger visitors, including a butterfly house. The main attraction of this part of the palace complex, however, is the world's largest hedge maze, representing the history of the palace, known as the Marlborough Maze. Opened in 1991, it is now mature enough to puzzle even the most wily of visitors.

In the same area is a model of a local street, as well as putting greens, giant chess and draughts, and lots more for children wanting to let off steam.

The visitors
Keith Jenkins, social work team manager, and his wife Sara, teacher, took their daughter Hannah and her friend Imogen, both seven years old.

Sara: The house has an idyllic setting, with its immense park and large lake, and smaller formal gardens around the house. Although we shared the day with thousands of others it was not claustrophobic; there was just a wonderful feeling of space. Everything is beautifully kept and well organised. No litter, no mess, no

queues and plenty of refreshment stops. The children couldn't follow the guided tour in the house, partly because they were swamped by a large group of adults so they were unable to see or hear. So I took them off and we made our own way, dodging between groups, and the children enjoyed looking at the tapestries, furniture and paintings at their own pace. We must have been inside for at least an hour.

Keith: The tours around the palace were well organised and kept moving despite the large number of people. I enjoyed the tour very much; it was both entertaining and historically interesting. The guides took us from one room to the next giving a brief story of the palace, the Churchills and the family, looking at a few objects along the way. It was fascinating. I thought the library was particularly impressive.

Essentially you come here to see the palace, but there is lots more, which makes it a good family day. It didn't feel over-hyped like stately homes which are dependent on theme parks. Blenheim had a pleasant, unsophisticated, old-

fashioned touch to it. It was a great way to combine education with a little bit of leisure.

Hannah: I really enjoyed the pleasure gardens where there was lots to do and see. I loved the maze, which was quite big and very difficult. I got lost a lot even though the hedges aren't that high. We also saw lots of pretty butterflies and plants in the butterfly house, and then we took the mini-train back to the house.

I loved going around the lake in the little boat. We saw masses of swans, a heron and a little grebe. It was a really good way to see the park, but we didn't go under the big bridge.

The house was interesting, too. In the room where Winston Churchill was born I saw a frame with his curios in it.

I liked the blue-and-white china and the huge tapestries on the wall – they were as big as a carpet and had really tiny stitches. We saw lots of clocks, furniture and statues – loads of things like that.

Imogen: I really enjoyed the park and the gardens – even though we were attacked

by wasps on our picnic. The maze was great and they had lots to play on, like monkey bars, putting and giant chess.

But the adventure playground wasn't so good, because it was stuck behind a high wall.

I thought the house was quite interesting but there was so much gold everywhere that it was completely over the top. In the library there was a statue of Queen Anne made of marble, but it had so much carving on it that it looked like marzipan.

The deal
Blenheim Palace (01993 811091), Woodstock, Oxfordshire, is 10 miles north of Oxford on the A44 and is well signposted. Parking is free in the park close to the palace entrance.

Opening hours: Blenheim Palace is open daily, 10.30am–5.30pm, last admission 4.45pm, from mid-March to the end of October. The park is open daily, 9am–5pm. Dogs are not allowed into the palace or the palace gardens, but may go on a lead in the park.

Admission: palace and park: adults £7.80, OAPs £5.80, children aged 5–15 £3.80. Family ticket (two adults, two children) £20. This includes the tour around the

house, the Churchill exhibition, boat ride, train rides and entrance to the herb garden, butterfly house as well as an adventure play-ground. Park only: adults £3, children aged 5 to 15, £1.50. Extras: Guided tours around private apartments from noon until 4pm: adults £3.40, children £1.70. Walled garden, which includes maze and children's games, £1. Bouncy castle, 50p. Brochure, £3.50.

Access: on foot or level ground, with lots of ramps for buggies and wheelchairs and a small train to take visitors from the house to the pleasure gardens.

Food: plenty of refreshment stops for drinks and ice-cream. Interesting lunches are served in the elegant Indian Room restaurant overlooking the water terraces: three courses £14.50, two courses £12.95. Lighter meals are offered at the adjoining cafeteria: baguettes £2.80, veggie sandwich £2.90. There is also a cafe in the pleasure gardens for light meals and snacks. Picnicking is popular and there is plenty of space.

Shop: there are a good number of shops selling books, gifts and sweets. Souvenirs range from Blenheim fudge to golf balls carrying the Blenheim logo.

Toilets: clean, efficient and numerous.

Are we nearly there Bank holiday days out

and light show over the lake with glowing tethered balloons and fireworks to finish. Adults £6, children £4 for one evening performance and one day time entry.

FOR THE VERY YOUNG
Pevensey Castle, Eastbourne (01323 762604)

hosts a teddy bears' picnic. Families with small children invited to bring along both Mr Ted and a picnic on Sunday and Monday between noon and 5pm to join in the festivities. Punch and Judy are planning to put in an appearance and for the more artistically adventurous there will be face painting. Adults £2.25 and concessions £2.25 and children (under 15) £1.50.

Hall Hill Farms, County Durham (01388 730300),

also plays host to the stuffed ones – more teddy bears abound. Other attractions include a children's entertainer and treasure hunt. Children will be able to get to know the animals on the interactive working farm. On both Sunday 24 and Monday 25, a family ticket for two adults and two children will cost £23.

The Lead Mining Museum, Sanguar (01299 250416) is

also dining al fresco with the grizzlies. Patrick the Clown

will entertain and the

children will have the

opportunity to learn circus skills. Entry is free, but does not include entry to the museum.

ALL DRESSED UP

Warwick Castle, Warwick (01926 406600). This weekend the castle

entertains the "Knights Errant". A medieval tale is told throughout the castle over the holiday period. At

1pm and 3.45pm the Magic

The North of England

Balloon Show, Ripley

Castle, North Yorkshire (01423 770152) takes place on Sunday and Monday there will be a re-enactment of the siege of the castle followed at 6pm by the balloon ascent. Every night there will be a laser

Michelle Ovens

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travel & outdoors

Wannabee artists and buzzy beards

So you thought bees just made honey and pollinated flowers? They can also be pretty creative, writes Patricia Cleveland-Peck



Wax lyrical: Aganetha Dyck's bee art at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. From the top: women's shoes; bird bath; wax tablets

PHOTOGRAPHS: JERRY HARDMAN JONES



Bees inspire eccentricity. Certainly the Canadian artist Aganetha Dyck is crazy about them. She has spent the summer "collaborating" with more than 500,000 bees in a most unusual project, the results of which are now on show at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Basically she places domestic objects such as shoes and teapots (even, at one stage, a park bench) within beehives and waits for the bees to coat them with honeycomb and wax. She then removes these objects and works on them, transforming them into shadowy, strangely disturbing artworks.

Her artistic career began in the early Eighties, when her early shows displayed everyday objects transformed into works of art by some form of domestic reprocessing – shrunk sweaters and bottled, fried and canned buttons, for example.

On a visit to the local Manitoba Bee Works to buy supplies she saw a text on the wall: "Bee Made Honey" – an obvious enough statement, except that the sign itself appeared to have been carved from honeycomb. When she learnt that it had been created by the bees themselves – on a mould placed in the hive – she realised the inherent possibilities of working "in collaboration" with bees. Last year she produced her most ambitious installation, *The Extended Wedding Party*, which is currently touring Holland. This consists of gowns, shoes, coats and a glass wedding dress which have been transformed by bees into unsettling images of change and decay.

In Yorkshire she worked for two months with local beekeepers to produce items that she feels signify the park itself. "I thought about what the Yorkshire Sculpture Park is about," she said. "It is natural, but at the same time man-made. Rather like the bees: they're in the hive, not their natural place. Then I thought of the people who visit the park and what they sometimes leave behind: things like shoes. Then I thought of what they do, which is to sit on the park benches, and British people drink tea, so I thought of the teapot ... I'm trying to connect, because bees connect world-wide."

"I regard the bees not as individuals but as a thought process, almost a computer software program," she continued. "And working with them fits in with the chances I take and the accidents I look for in my work. They are a force I totally respect. I love their warmth and tenacity, and the fact that they have such an old form of construction – and not being a perfect builder myself I find their construction totally perfect."

In fact, although Aganetha usually takes the coated object out of the hive and works on it further, adding wax or taking some away, there are times when she finds the bees' ideas better than her own, and changes nothing.

She hopes to continue working with bees, and is already envisaging new ways of doing so. "I would like to work long-distance, using the same equipment that sur-

geons use to guide operations in remote areas. From Canada I could construct things in a hive in another country using this new computer-imaging technique."

Natalie Hodgson, too, is keen on bees. Her bees inhabit no ordinary hive, but a custom-made bee village made up of 20 brightly painted miniature shops and houses including "The Beehive Inn" and "St Ambrose's Church". As well as her apary in Shropshire, Mrs Hodgson runs a pick-your-own lavender farm – a combination that makes for a distinctly different day out.

In particular, a bee viewing tunnel has proved a magnet for children. "I got the idea in Poland," said Mrs Hodgson. "The Poles are keen beekeepers and at the bee museum I saw a wooden hive made in the form of a life-size peasant woman in national dress. To get at the bees you lifted her skirt up at the back. That, I thought, was a bit rude for Shropshire, but it did inspire me ..."

A bee village may be fine, but what about a bee boat? Bruno Poissonnier and his wife and two children live on their barge in the South of France together with all their bees, plus the equipment for extracting the honey. They are even preparing a cabin for bee-loving B&B guests.

Bruno, who has a degree in philosophy, started keeping bees 15 years ago and now sells honey both wholesale and retail. The boat navigates the Canal des Deux Mers, which runs between Bordeaux and Béziers, giving Bruno's bees the pick of some of the loveliest countryside in France. Not only can Bruno move the boat to wherever the best honey-producing crops are to be found, but his bees receive remuneration (at about £1,000 a go) for pollinating canalside fields.

Meanwhile, over in the States, bee eccentricity has taken on a new dimension with bee-bearding. The idea is to encourage bees to congregate around your face and neck in the form of a living "beard". This is achieved by taking the queen and either strapping her in a container to your neck or placing her gently in your mouth ... The bees, attracted by the queen's pheromones, will then swarm around her, creating the beard effect. The swarming bees are full of honey so the risk is not as great as it looks, enabling the dozen of this unlikely sport, Dr Norman Gary, a beekeeper who supplies colonies to American film and television companies, to demonstrate this arcane art naked while playing the clarinet.

Aganetha Dyck's Yorkshire Bee Project is on view at the Camellia House, The Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Bretton Hall, West Bretton, Wakefield, West Yorkshire (01924 830302) until 26 October.

Natalie Hodgson's bee village and lavender farm is at Astley Abbotts, Bridgnorth, Shropshire (01746 763122).

For enquiries about B&B accommodation aboard Bruno Poissonnier's Bateau Abbie, write to the Marie de Vianne, 47230 Vianne, France, asking them to forward your letter.

The Best-Kept Village competition is upon us again, and once more your correspondent has the ticklish job of judging the Gloucestershire final. For our county this is a year of special significance: similar contests are now held all over England, but it was here that they originated in 1937, when the first Lord Bledisloe presented a cup bearing his name for the village that had done most to improve its environment. Next month the 60th anniversary will be celebrated by a festive lunch, at which the present Lord Bledisloe – grandson of the founder – will preside.

The final judge feels a certain responsibility.

Certainly there is an obligation not to offend: one must seek to be constructive. Another key rule is that natural advantages such as fine buildings and glorious scenery should be left out of account: it is evidence of effort that matters.

As usual, most of the hard work has been done before my arrival. Other judges have winnowed 40-odd entrants down to six. I merely have to decide between two in each category: "small" (up to 300 inhabitants), "middle" (300 to 1,000) and "large" (1,000 to 3,000).

In the hope that small would be beautiful, I started my tour with Shipton Moyne (population 275), near Malmesbury. Villagers know the bracket within which judges are required to perform, and judges, in turn, may either declare themselves or arrive incognito. Preferring anonymity, I rolled up on a bicycle and was entranced by the horticultural perfection: gardens glowed with flowers and velvet lawns, verges were beautifully mown.

My hackles rose when I came on something white lying in the road. Litter, by



A ticklish job: judging the finals of the Best Kept Village in Gloucestershire

George! But no – it was a crisp, new envelope, evidently containing an invitation card, which someone must have dropped on a delivery round.

As I approached the churchyard, I described a man loitering – with, I immediately suspected, intent to spot and beard the Bledisloe Cup adjudicator. When the fellow stepped up and asked if I were lost, my suspicion was intensified, so I airily said, "No, thanks. I'm fine. Just going to look at the church."

The graveyard was delightful, giving on to open grass fields. But the jewel of the hamlet was Post Office Corner, with its immaculately mown green, its riot of flowers, and its good red telephone box, polished inside and out, and cool in the shade of a chestnut tree.

How to compare such a paragon with its only rival, Staunton (pop 297), way off to the west in the Forest of Dean? Where Shipton Moyne is flat, Staunton perches on steep slopes, and has wonderful views of wooded hills all round. It also has more natural curiosities: an ancient animal pound, areas

of rough common ground, and a huge rock which in profile shows exactly why it is known as the Frog's Mouth.

These God-given advantages should be disregarded, I know. Yet it is clear that the villagers make exceptional efforts to look after their heritage. How to weigh their achievement against that of their rival 50 miles to the east?

In the "middle" category, the two finalists are curiously similar. Bledington (pop 440), near Chipping Norton, and Willersey (pop 650), close to Broadway. Both have a pleasantly relaxed air, with broad open spaces and no sense of crowding. Again, I found it hard to decide between two communities which obviously strive to keep standards high.

As for the big boys – Lechlade (2,500) and Bourton-on-the-Water (3,000) – both have been heavily infiltrated by the demon tourist. In each, water is a leading attraction – the strippling Thames and its marina at Lechlade, the infant Windrush running straight through the green at Bourton. The first place is still afloat, the second all but swamped by the weight of visitors.

In both, litter is a pernicious problem: the faster you pick it up, the faster they drop it. The judge has to raise his gaze above burger boxes and exploded bags of fish and chips, concentrating instead on features such as the fine new village hall at Lechlade, and the tremendous blaze of flowers all through Bourton's centre. But again, it is impossible to pronounce one better than the other.

It is easy enough for me to write "watch this space". But before I put anything more into it, I have to sort out the multiple impressions of excellence churning around in my head.

The Highlands' hidden treasure

Weekend walk: Hamish Scott takes a high road through land steeped in ancient myth

Even on the map, the Silver Walk appears romantic. Starting at a ruined castle in the western Highlands, the evocatively named footpath trails along the wooded shoreline of Loch Moidart to link up with a mountain path through crags and cliffs that face the distant Hebrides. The four-mile circuit takes in a deserted village and a "loch of blood" that was the site of a clan battle. According to some local tales, the path may even lead the walker to a cache of buried treasure.

We arrived at Castle Tioram on a perfect summer's morning. The old Clanranald stronghold stood reflected in the mirror surface of the sheltered sea loch. Golden seaweed glistened on the shores of wooded islands; bare mountains framed the far horizon. The castle, we decided, should be our destination rather than our starting-point, so we walked on past the sandbank leading to its entrance, and at the far end of the beach we climbed a narrow path that wound its way precariously above the shore through tangled trees and tumbling rocks.

When the path was being cut, a century ago, Elizabethan coins were discovered in a crevice. Hence the name Silver Walk. But there's a darker aspect to the tale: of a theft from Tioram's coffers, and of a serving girl suspected of the crime tied by her long hair to seaweed on a rock that can be seen below the path, the Rock of James's Daughter. Some say that only a small fraction of the loot was found...

Distracted by the possibility of finding coins in an intriguing cavity beneath a fallen tree, I almost stepped out into empty space 50ft above the loch. Rhododendrons, I discovered, have surprisingly strong branches.

We stopped to rest beside a burn as the walk descended to the water's edge, then, at a little cairn, we headed inland up a rougher path that climbed into the hills. On a lonely plateau high above the loch we found the broken walls of old stone cottages and byres. The village's entire population was forcibly evicted and transported to Australia in the 1840s, when Clan-

Frasers and Macdonalds, occasioned by some social gaffes committed at a banquet in the castle.

We forked right by the lochside, climbing through a gully to another small hill loch perched on the very summit of the pass. Sitting on a dam, the relic of an old experiment in hydroelectricity, we soothed our feet in ice-cool water under the hot sun. Far below us lay Loch Moidart with its archipelago of islands, while the larger isles of Muck and Eigg floated on the blue horizon. A steep but easy path beside a stream took us back down to the road along the shore.

The tide was in, leaving only a thin strip of sand connecting Castle Tioram to the mainland, and we were the only visitors. Relishing such atmospheric solitude, we explored the roofless halls and kitchens, peered into the dungeon and discovered a medieval lavatory strategically positioned just above the entrance gate, a system of defence that might strike a sympathetic chord with modern eco-warriors.

But Castle Tioram's future lies in the balance: it is currently for sale, priced at just £100,000. The present chieftain of Clanranald is co-ordinating a campaign to preserve it for the local community rather than letting it slip into private hands and be redeveloped – in which case the Highlands might lose a ruin of magical enchantment.

A good pub lunch can be hard to find in the west Highlands, where prepacked breaded haddock all too often masquerades as a local specialty. On the road back to Lochaline we were fortunate to find the Glenug Inn, where we ate freshly landed prawns that the landlord had "diverted" from their route to Barcelona. The old inn has had a chequered past – torched after the disastrous '45 uprising, closed down in the 19th century for operating an illicit whisky still and, until a road was built just 30 years ago, accessible only from the sea. The history of Scotland, as we were discovering, is not learnt from books so much as from walks and bar-room tales.

Directions

- Castle Tioram lies off the A861 between Lochaline and Achiaracle.
- Turn right out of car-park and follow shore to end of beach. Climb steep path, continuing along shore for one and a half miles.
- At small cairn, turn sharp right up hill. Follow path through deserted village and over crest of hill to loch.
- Fork right at intersection above shore of loch.
- Climb pass to hill-loch and follow path downhill. Turn right along road to return to castle.

Ordnance Survey Pathfinder map 275



all consuming

The deli of an architect



Conran style: his shops already include small shops selling spices, bread and luxurious olive oil

These days, if you want to buy the freshest pasta, the most exotic breads and the finest extra-virgin olive oil to drizzle over your rocket salad, you don't go to the supermarket.

No, silly, you pop to the nearest furniture or department store. Well that's how it seems, as yet another trendy shop gets ready to launch a range of groceries. This weekend, Habitat stores throughout Britain and Europe will start selling own-brand foods: pesto sauce, wild Italian mushrooms, balsamic vinegar, sushi.

And to prove that Habitat is not just setting itself up as a fashionable delicatessen, these foods will sit alongside more basic fare such as tomato ketchup, tea, coffee, and chocolate biscuits. The chain, formerly owned by Terence Conran (we'll come to him in a minute) and now run by the Swedish company Stitching Ingka, thought it was high time we bought our kitchenware and food under the same roof.

The idea is that we'll want to try out our shiny new cooking utensils with some delicious Habitat groceries: "We think this food range establishes us as a one-stop shopping emporium," says a Habitat spokeswoman. "We're selling essential products for modern living."

As you would expect, the packaging is simple yet stylish. There's no uniform colour scheme, but gold-topped glass bottles and silver and

cellophane packets line the chrome shelves. However, while the look is minimalist the prices aren't. Although you can pick up tomato puree for 45p, a five-litre tin of olive oil will set you back £25. According to Kevin Gould, who designed the range and supplies many of the products, it's money well spent.

"When Habitat approached me I said, 'You need to do this properly', so everything is as unmanufactured and unpackaged as possible, without looking like health food. It's not worthy but it's tasty," he explains.

He runs the RealFood Store and Joy, in London, and prides himself on selling only the finest foods, with no added colouring or flavourings. "The great thing about us is that I know exactly where our products come from and the name of the person who makes it," enthuses Kevin. "For example, every week I have buffalo mozzarella flown in from a little town in Italy, and I even know the name of the person who drives it in their van to the airport.

"I think our customers appreciate that knowledge, because it makes the whole experience more intimate," he says.

Since opening his business six years ago, he has become a much-sought-after caterer, taking orders from the opera singer Luciano Pavarotti, the fashion designer Issey Miyake, and the fashion chain Jigsaw, as well as acting

as a consultant to Marks & Spencer. Born out of a limited Christmas selection, the Habitat range now takes in 120 core lines, and is set to expand even further, says Kevin. He believes other stores will follow their lead, but takes his hat off to Harvey Nichols, which launched its hugely successful Foodmarket in 1992.

"Harvey Nichols opened the door to making food funky and aspirational, and it's become a growing trend."

But the real pioneer of fashionable furniture and food was Conran. He started it all with his riverside Gastrodome at Butlers Wharf a year earlier. His site incorporates four restaurants, including the waterfront Pont de la Tour, an oil and spice shop, a wine merchant's, a bakery and a food store. So those diners who wanted to go home and re-create the dishes they'd just eaten, could pick up the necessary ingredients next door.

Mesmerised by the food markets of France and Italy, Conran realised his dream earlier this year with the launch of Bluebird, the ultimate one-stop shop. It's based on the trendy King's Road, in the converted grade II-listed Bluebird Garage, just down the road from Habitat and Heals. It has a bustling and colourful outdoor fruit and vegetable market, a large food market, a wine merchant's, a flower market, a kitchen shop, a bakery, a patisserie, a rest-

aurant, a cafe, a bar and a private dining-club.

Conran explains the inspiration behind his concept by launching into a eulogy of European food markets. "The stalls are packed high with wonderful misshapen tomatoes, purple aubergines, sweet ripe melons, aromatic herbs and an abundance of fresh, locally grown produce. Such markets are a feast for all the senses: eyes dazzled by the variety and generosity, ears alive with the hubbub of activity; hands busy rummaging through crates to find the sweetest, ripest fruit and vegetables; the nose seduced by the mingling aromas of fresh fish, juicy fruit and local herbs; the mouth teased by expectations of such delicious food tastes..."

Judging by the number of people that like to be designer-fed and have their homes filled with designer furniture, this shopping combination is the way ahead.

After all, it makes life easier if you can get all you want under one roof. It just remains to be seen which stores will be tempted to go down the same path. Certainly, the line between department stores and supermarkets has already been blurred. You only have to look at Sainsbury's and Tesco to see how they're turning into, well, department stores.

Many already sell kitchen utensils, books and records, and presumably it won't be long before they start to sell furniture.

It sells sofas, lamps and rugs ...

now Janet Knight goes shopping

at Conran stores for food



Harvey Nichols: opened the door to making food funky

Under the counter with Lindsay Calder

I think these sultry nights are doing my head in. That, and the cat waking me up at 2am with a blade of grass stuck up her nose. So, off to the emergency vet, and £74 later she was fine. I wasn't. Every night I have a weird and weirder dream. Last week I dreamt that I had a sore throat, so I went to the doctor, and he prescribed cigarettes. But because they were prescription, they cost £55 a packet. So I said to him, "Sod that, I'll buy them over the counter" - but they only had blackcurrant flavoured ones. "No, no," I was saying. "I want Silk Cut, Lucky Strike..." Then I woke up. I don't even smoke.

Now I keep waking up at 2am, clasping my throat, scowling at the cat, and fumbling for the Evian. The books I am reading are not exactly soporific - *Trainspotting* and *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*. So after yet another pitiful dream, I think: TV - there will be a nice unscary black and white movie on - the kind with women in hats, who talk with clipped accents and get married after the first kiss. But not quite.

Instead, I surf into *The Sex Show on Live TV*. Don't get excited - this must be the most erotic viewing on earth - even Niles and Frasier Crane are racier. A brassy blonde with a regional accent promises "this is the show that will keep you up all night". I don't think so, sweetie. First off is *Pleasure Dome*, a sort of QVC à la Anne Summers. The first item up for grabs is a pink "gelo-vibrator", which slapper B enthuses about while slapper A tries to rub it seductively up and down her leg, but it keeps sticking to her skin and bending in the middle, like some sort of jelly horror-lolly. Next up is a "love egg" - "for the woman in your life". Slapper B swears by hers, because you can just pop it in and enjoy it at the bus stop, in the supermarket, or at work. Can you imagine: "Take a letter, Miss Jones, and by the way, what's that strange vibrating noise - have you left your

electric tooth brush in your pocket?" There are several other moulded plastic items in varying degrees of rigidity, the sales patter going along the lines of "nice colour" and "no, almost as good as the real thing". At least it isn't QVC, or they would have the tape measure out. But maybe the length of the "gel-vibrator" is more important than the length of a solid gold money-back guarantee.

Now it's competition time. Matt's apter-public school IT consultant, who has actually knowingly applied to be a contestant on the show. He has turned up in his suit and tie, and must feel mighty over-dressed, compared all the g-strings, buttocks and breasts wobbling around him. His competitive nature shines through, as he joins in the first game, "Basket-bra". In true gladiator style, the contestants are pitted against two girls, in this case "page three belles", Tracey and Mandy.

Topless Tracey dons a basket ball basket, instead of a bra, and good old Matt attempts to get as many balls in there as he can, while Tracey jumps up and down to avoid them. You can almost imagine Ulrika doing this in *Shooting Stars* challenge. In the end, Matt is triumphant, as Tracey couldn't quite jiggle enough to stay out of the way of his balls.

Next is "Suss the susses" competition: "take a long look at Linda's lovely legs" and remember what her suspenders look like. There is a multiple choice of two answers: black or white ... By the time Private Dancer - "vibe for the babe you want to bear all" - comes on, I'm half-asleep. The private dancer is a completely flat-chested "lovey", gyrating in an andromedan manner in the middle of the floor. I'm feeling very, very sleepy.

The Sex Show, Live TV, Saturdays, 11.30pm-Sun. 12.30am. Too can play *Basket-bra* to register on the contestant hotline dial 0891 700 183

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Notting Hillbillies

Whether this weekend is your first Carnival or your 32nd, it's all about fun in the sun, music and dance. And don't forget, says Melanie Rickey, wear comfy shoes and bring a bandana



Party on: revellers at last year's carnival

PHOTOGRAPHS: MUZIC MAGAZINE



Ragga Girl: shoes from Shelly's, clothes from Kookai, Morgan, and local lingerie shops. Plenty of gold chain belts and accessories will authenticate the look, but it could weigh you down; also long painted nails required, stick-on fakes are easiest, about £2.99, from Boots



Just whistle: last year 755,000 were sold in Notting Hill, blown together they are louder than a jumbo taking off

Rasta Boy: wears red gold and green shirt from second hand haunts like Portobello market, approx £5, or buy them new from your local market, approx £15. Adidas tracksuit trousers, £30, from all good sports shops. Reef flip flops, £18, from Low Pressure, one of the carnival goers' favourite shops, 186 Kensington Park Road, W11. 0171 792 3134

Hip Hop Boy: best place for purists is Bond International, 10 Newburgh Street, West Soho, W1. Haunt of Mettheadz gang, and Hip-Hop and Jungle DJ's who are buying the biggest bum-bag it is feasible to wear; it costs £35 by Outdoor, also Stussy Pork-Pie hats, from £25, and Monaco long baggy army shorts, £55. Alternatively head for nearest big sports shop to get the look.

Getting there once in London

Underground: open for way out only on Sunday and Monday. It will not be possible to catch a train from this station.
Central Line: open for way out only between 11am and 5pm on Sunday and Monday. It will not be possible to catch a train from this station between these times. Outside these hours the station is open.
Circle Line: closed Saturday and Monday.
Metropolitan Line (District & Circle Line): Sunday way out only between 9am and 5pm. Outside these hours the station is open. Monday to Friday no train stopping between 9am and 5pm. Outside these times the station is open.
Charing Cross Line: closed Saturday and Monday, open for way out only between 9am and 5pm outside these hours.
Waterloo Line: Sunday way out only on Sunday and Monday.
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For more information call the Travel Information Service 0171 222 2222.

The Time: This Bank Holiday The Place: Anywhere The essentials...

No one likes carrying extra baggage, so take a holdall rather than a suitcase. Not only are the current crop smart and colourful, but their size gives you the added advantage of being first off the plane when flying. vanity cases and travel-size bottles into which you can decant your beauty products are also good ideas.

The Jolly Folding Trolley comes in 13 bright colours and is priced at £16.95, from the Holding Company (mail order, 0171-610 9160).

Make extra room in your bag by taking your beauty products in a vanity case like this trendy metal design from Boots, price £39.99.

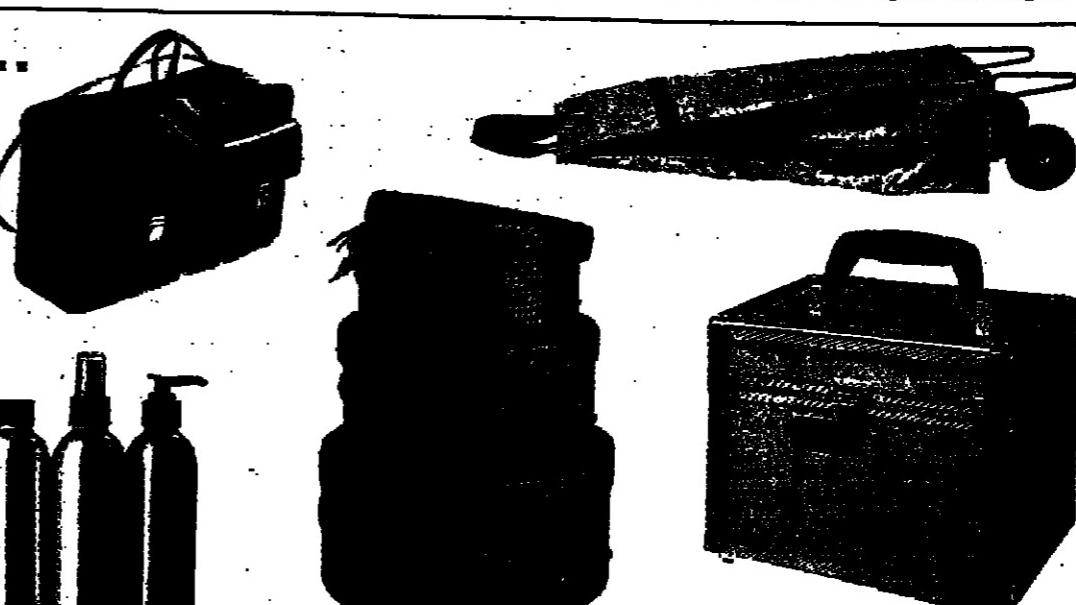
Lightweight aluminium bottles, like these from the Holding Company, can be used for shampoo and cleansers and make great space-savers. They cost between £8.50 and £10.50.

If you want your luggage to make a statement, then this black and purple leather holdall from Gucci should do the trick. It costs £390.

If you don't want your hat to get squashed, try a purple woven hat box, price £19.95 to £31.95, from the Holding Company.

These cheerful red, yellow and blue terry flower overnighters cost £69.95, from the Holding Company.

By Janet Knight



Andrew Medd, marketing manager for Lilt UK (which is part of the Coca-Cola company), makes it clear that the carnival can only benefit from the company's involvement. "We care about the people who go, so we've designed a comprehensive official map, and employed stewards to keep the procession running smoothly," he says.

Lilt has also increased the prize money for all competition winners by 50 per cent. There will not be a Lilt music stage, and no free cans of the drink will be given away in the street. "We don't want to take business away from the entrepreneurs, which is the essence of the event," continues Medd.

During the company's first year of sponsorship, Lilt whistles were sold, but when street vendors began to lose money (755,000 whistles were sold last year, at £1-£2 each) the practice was stopped.

Instead, Lilt is concentrating on selling three different styles of T-shirt: V-neck, round neck and one-shoulder, which cost £5 each. There will be six sites on the route where you can buy them.

The question of what to wear to the Notting Hill Carnival is for the individual to decide, and for most people it certainly won't be a Lilt T-shirt. Above all, practicality should take over. Shoes must be comfortable (most festival goers will walk at least six miles in a day), and the clothes loose (it will be very hot), with plenty of pockets.

For those in the business of making carnival happen - the DJs, the organisers, the bands and the dancers - dress codes are important. For the most part, what you wear is dependent on music taste, and it can all get very complicated.

Jungle DJ's Goldie and Krust like Tommy Hilfiger. "He's the only corporate designer I wear," says Goldie. "He doesn't know the music market in the same way as the skate companies Stussy and DC, but he's trying, and I respect that." Junglists tend to be seen in baggy, low-slung shorts with plenty of labels on show.

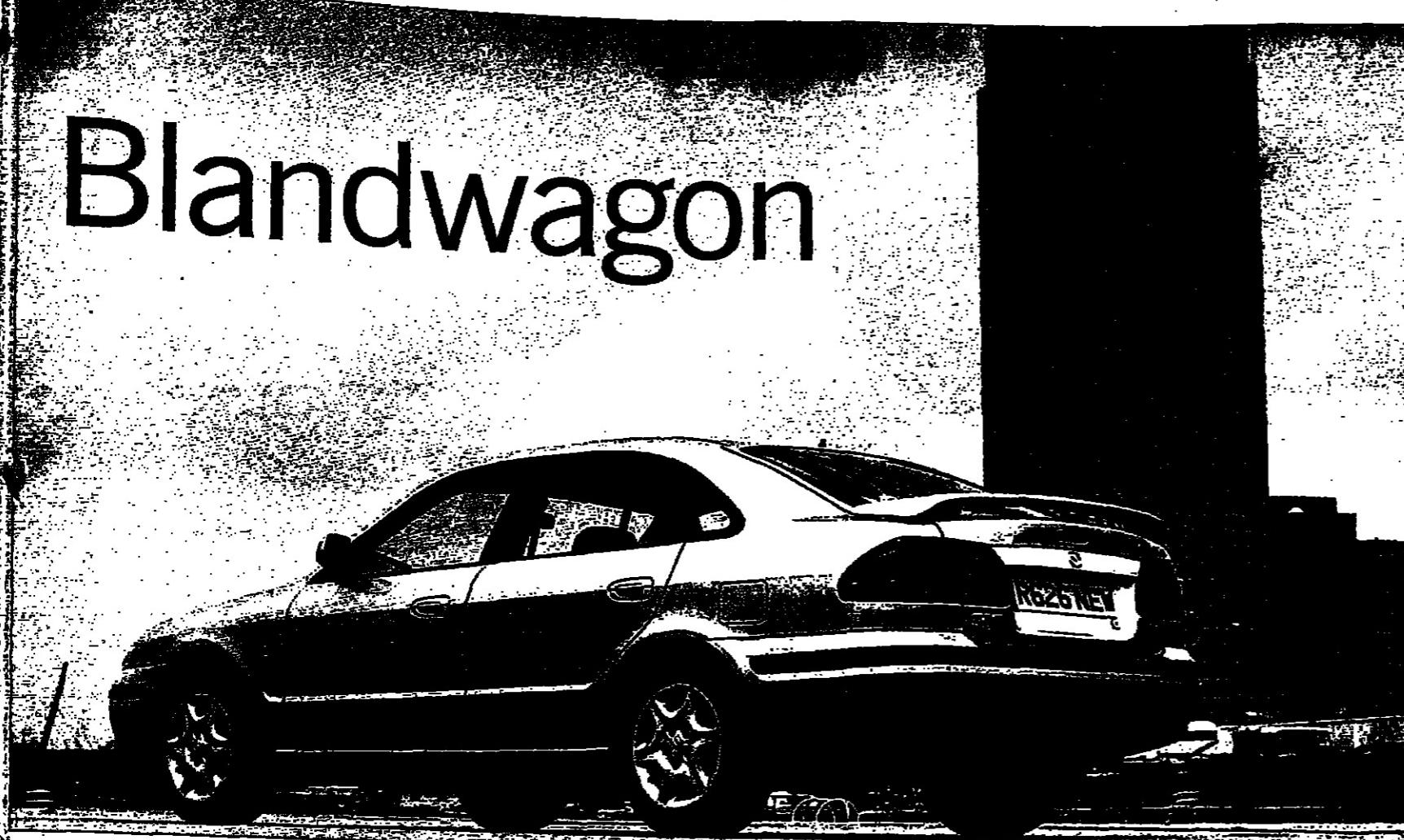
For the Ragga fans there will be vivid Lycra, loud, silky Versace shirts, oversized garments and meticulously razor-nicked denim; the Ragga girls wear as little as possible.

Rastas usually just stick to red, gold and green T-shirts, big hats and comfy trousers.

Whatever you decide to wear, take some advice from veteran carnival goers, who all say: "Bring a bandana to mop the sweat from your brow; it's the only thing you will care about after an hour dancing in the sun."

Not the most glamorous piece of advice, but surely the most practical.

Blandwagon



Mazda gets very cross when you describe its products as bland. And it's true that there are some very un-blend Mazdas, the MX-5 sports car and the shapely Xedos 6 saloon being the most obvious. But anything with a 626 badge, which means Mondeo-sized, has for the last decade or so been as visually unmemorable as a car could be. There are few cars that an expert can't immediately identify on the road, but a 626 is often one of them. And the new one doesn't change a thing.

In some ways, it's worse. The five-door hatchback version of the outgoing model

did manage one interesting styling feature, a rear aerofoil whose shape smoothly moved into becoming the rear window surround - it looked like part of the design instead of a status-enhancing addendum. But guess what? It's gone, replaced by the most obvious, most unoriginal of tacked-on rear wings to make an already fussy rear end even untidier.

From the side, the new car mimics the tensionless bogginess of the old one, but the rising waistline, which gave its predecessor a semblance of visual motion, has vanished. But at least there's a Mazda-identifying front grille, so we may

know a 626 when it comes towards us.

So what's going on? The pattern was set by Nissan and is followed by Mazda: when a Japanese car company is in the financial mire, it turns in on itself and looks back. Result: new cars that look as dull as the old ones, created on the basis that if people bought the old dullards, they'll surely buy the new ones, too.

Except that they may not buy them,

ROAD TEST Mazda 626

by John Simister

can't be long before some of this fair rubs off on Mazda, so let's hope the 626 is the last flicker of timid conservatism. The irony is that the design for the new car started at Mazda's European studio, a fact that the company makes much of. It was,

because trends have moved on in the meantime. Mazda is now controlled by Ford, which is making some highly adventurous designs (the Ka, the Puma, the new Fiesta). It turns in on itself and looks back. Result: new cars that look as dull as the old ones, created on the basis that if people bought the old dullards, they'll surely buy the new ones, too.

Except that they may not buy them,

however, finished in Japan. Make of that what you will.

The interior shows no more flair, it could have come from any Japanese maker. But it does have "intelligent" air-conditioning in all models. This is simply an automatic set-and-forget system, admirably effective and unusual in a mid-price family car, but hardly a new idea.

Am I being hard on the Mazda 626? After all, it's well made and well equipped. It's reasonably priced (starting at £13,960 for the 1.8) and it probably does all that many people want from a car. This sounds like faint praise, so I'll go

further: the £16,910 2.0 GSi I drove was lively, with a smooth and quiet engine, confident steering and excellent road-holding. In these areas it is indeed much better than the outgoing model. More's the pity, then, that the new car's looks give so little hint of these improvements.

To drive, the 626 is better than a Vauxhall Vectra and as good as a Ford Mondeo, apart from loud tyre roar on coarse surfaces. But that's not reason enough to buy one. If you like your cars colourless and unobtrusive, you'll like the 626. But why buy a car for mere co-existence, when there are so many to admire and enjoy?

Want to get your way through the jam of car sites on the Web? James Ruppert finds a route – and a host of automotive trivia

A cruise along the superhighway

When it comes to cars and the Internet, unless you know your way around you could end up just pottering along down some rural B-road and hitting a dead end. However, with the right route map you can hit an M25-sized jam of information, especially as manufacturers take the net more seriously and an international band of auto-anoraks do their utmost to provide you with uninformed, yet fascinating, car-related facts.

Looking for a new car? Why waste time trudging around forecourts, car lots and visiting private sellers when there are thousands of models waiting for you in an on-screen cyber showroom. This has become big business in the United States where dedicated Internet-based traders have each sold more than 20,000 cars a year. A peek at the US Autoweb site shows how developed the system is. It will even e-mail you once a car you want is found, but isn't much use if you want to buy a right-hand-drive Ford Escort. On this side of the pond, Motortrak showed some potential. I typed in my requirements for a Jaguar Sovereign and it came up with 18 choices. I wanted more details and was led to a dealer, Lancaster in Sevenoaks, where I could look at a picture of the Jaguar and all the details I needed to know. Then I checked out some of the other Sovereigns, all of which seemed to live at Lancaster's. I soon realised that there are not enough advertisers to make this system work.

I tried looking for the most common Ford Escort 1.6 hatchback. No match was found. Asking for any Escort at all threw up 38 choices, but once again it was just one dealer group with the cars. A site with 150,000 car prices wasn't much help either, failing to value a common-or-garden Escort.

More useful was a comprehensive listing of franchised dealers in every county and town courtesy of Car DealerNet UK which helps buyers to track down new cars. Dealers run their own sales Web sites, but some, like the Ford outlet Perrys in Milton Keynes, found that updating

it was very time consuming and the response low.

This is mainly because, for the majority of car buyers, the net isn't the obvious place to start looking. Clearly the Internet has the potential to change the way we actually buy and sell cars, but not just yet.

By contrast, the traditional print media, in the shape of the *Exchange & Mart* and *Autotrader* titles, have transferred rather well to the screen. Type in the used car of your dreams, enter your budget and your postcode, and, with *Autotrader*, dozens of choices flood the screen. Great. Saves you a trip to the newsagent. However, half the fun of thumbing through the real *Autotrader* magazine is stumbling across a car you wouldn't normally have considered. This is why the links to other car-related Web sites are so diverting.

I found myself looking at pictures of someone's Volkswagen Beetle which was being restored – and, rather worryingly, found it fascinating. Once you are off through the links there is no telling where you will end up. I stopped off at the Cop Car Registry to pore over the National Highway Patrol Reference Guide to discover that if I was ever in Alabama the state troopers drive around in battleship-grey Ford Crown Victorias. There were also useful tips to avoid

getting caught in that state's speed traps.

Interested in James Bond's cars? Then there is a site with pictures, plus everything you didn't need to know about the

cars, including registration numbers. Motorsport? Then visit Ferrari's grand Prix team, or McLaren. But then just as you are getting sensible, up pops

The Murray Walker Quotes Page compiled by Pete Fenlon and dedicated to the pearls of commentary wisdom from the voice of Formula One. Contributions from around the globe include "With half the race gone, there is half the race still to go". There is one picture of the great man and a reassurance that Murray has seen and enjoyed the site.

Weird stuff is everywhere on the Web. Luckily there is sensible and quite useful stuff too. Multi Media Mapping can provide a map of anywhere in the UK, with a street locator and route finder options. Although a free service and a shop window for their skills, they will want your e-mail address for marketing purposes, a minor inconvenience for a very useful online resource.

Manufacturers have caught on to the possibilities of the Internet and, compared to the cost of high-profile advertising and glossy brochures, cyberspace is a cheap way to get their company message across. Vauxhall has an excellent site, complete with a Traffic Master Information service to spot jams, a used car finder as well as all the usual Vauxhall's in action type shots.

As you would expect, BMW has an accomplished site and managed to locate the whereabouts of 15 M3 coupes that I'll never be able to afford. BMW owners of Rover, have also created an enthusiastic official Mini site which not only tells you all you need to know about the lovable small car, but even lets you design, on screen, your own Mini.

Also plying their trade on the net are car magazines which ought to stick to the shelf. It is difficult to see the point in these, but they could snare new readers with up to date news. Carworld Connect involves three magazines – *Car*, *Performance Car* and *Classic Cars* – and has links to other sites and a forum which allows you to chat away with other petrol heads. However, you may find it more stimulating to look at unobtainable foreign publications like *Motor Trend* from America and an exclusively Internet woman motorist site which doesn't patronise.

As a practical car buying tool, the Internet is not yet a sensible option. For automotive trivia lovers, though, there are hundreds of wonderful wasted hours at local-rate call charge waiting to happen. The automotive Internet is hardly a superhighway but the roadworks are definitely under way. In a few years time we could wonder why anyone ever bothered to visit a showroom, or buy a motoring magazine. In the meantime, have fun cruising.

Free maps and route finding: www.multimap.com. **Official Mini info:** www.mini.co.uk. **Ads plus good links:** www.autotrader.co.uk. **Manufacturer info and traffic updates:** www.vauxhall.co.uk. **A superior manufacturer's site:** www.bmw.co.uk. **Used car ads:** www.exchangeandmart.co.uk. **Schumacher's F1 team:** www.shell-ferrari.com. **An American car magazine:** www.motortrend.com. **Insider info on the US Highway Patrol:** www.speedtrap.com/speedtrap/copsCars. **Three car magazines:** www.erack.com/car. **Murray Walkers:** www.users.zetnet.co.uk/pete/tracing/walkers.htm. **An American women's Web magazine:** www.womanmotorist.com.

A car's looks now matter most to buyers. Even Toyota has been playing the style game

If cars were bought for commonsense reasons, we'd all be driving Toyota Corollas. But what we drive depends on our prejudices and, just as important, our tastes.

Style sells. Research suggests that, aside from previous experience, it is a car's looks which now matter most to car buyers. Leading the charge to make cars look more beautiful is Pininfarina, the Italian design house responsible for most Ferraris, various Peugeots (including the 205) and the odd failure (the unsightly Rolls-Royce Camargue comes to mind).

I have just driven Pininfarina's latest creation, the Peugeot 406 coupé, and I think it is the most beautiful non-Ferrari I have driven in years. As with all great design, it does not achieve its beauty through gimmickry or mere detailing. It is the overall proportions of its shape which enchant.

The nose – the "face" of the car – could hardly be simpler. Yet combine the slimmest of headlamps with a shark-like mouth, and you have a face that stands out in the traffic maelstrom. Just as important, the cabin is handsome, too. Too many car makers try to cheer up other road users with

their style, forgetting their own customers, stuck in characterless, plasticky cabins.

Pininfarina has long made lovely, if pricy, cars. But many mass makers are now following. Audi is one of the best. Its two-year-old A8, crafted from aluminium, is probably the world's most handsome saloon. This is partly because of its stance, and partly from its muscular body: skin stretched tight over the mechanicals. As with the 406

coupe, there is nothing gimmicky about it; it's the shape that counts.

The new A6, although more controversial with its rounded edges and bunched-up tail, is also visually superb.

Renault's design boss, Patrick Le Quement, has long pushed publicly for good and harmonious car design. And he has done much good work.

never more than drive, dynamic appeal and technical initiative. Fords now look special. Some may be ugly (such as the Scorpio) while others are controversial (the Ka). But you now look at a new Ford with admiration rather than pity.

What an extraordinary world – one of dull Citroëns and exciting Fords! Even Toyota has been forced to play the style game. Toyota saloons used to look dull (though they still sold). Toyota was the M&S of motoring. But the new Corolla has a noticeable face, and street presence. It appeals to those high in sense, as well as sensibility.

THE INDEPENDENT

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ABA 32	2.500
ABA 33	2.500
ABA 34	2.500
ABA 35	2.500
ABA 36	2.500
ABA 37	2.500
ABA 38	2.500
ABA 39	2.500
ABA 40	2.500
ABA 41	2.500
ABA 42	2.500
ABA 43	2.500
ABA 44	2.500
ABA 45	2.500
ABA 46	2.500
ABA 47	2.500
ABA 48	2.500
ABA 49	2.500
ABA 50	2.500
ABA 51	2.50

homes & money

Collect to invest: make the most of paper money ... 22
Screen test: getting clued up on the web ... 28
Unit trusts ... 24

You'd think that, having spent a fortune on a country mansion, a buyer would invariably expect the house to reflect the gravitas of its financial standing. Not a bit of it: for all the discreet new owners of Old Rectories, there are always a few who promptly change the name of the place to Toad Hall or Pooch Corner. And to drive the joke home, a matching house sign or weather vane may be commissioned.

One bachelor owner of a country house asked Village Green Signs in Middlesex to make him a sign for the renamed Bedside Manor, bearing a hand-painted scene of a nurse in suspenders sitting on a four-poster bed. He is admitted a spokeswoman for the company, an exception to the rule. Most people ask for foxgloves, squirrels or badgers.

Not all personalised additions are naff. One keen gardener commissioned a weather vane shaped like the famous gardener Gertrude Jekyll - though who would recognise the old girl up on the roof, it's hard to say.

"You do have to be careful with the design," warns a spokeswoman for the Southampton-based weather vane company

Fancy a badger, a biplane or a bedstead on your roof? You are not alone, writes Rosalind Russell

Good Directions. "What may start out as a swan can look like a sparrow once it's up there."

The cockerel is the most traditional design for a weather vane. When Pope Gregory sent St Augustine to convert us, he decreed the cockerel to be the symbol of Christianity. But now hobbies, professions and pets feature on walls and roofs.

Village Green made a specially ordered house sign for the athlete Fatima Whitbread, showing her throwing a javelin. Good Directions made a weather vane for Nigel Mansell shaped like a racing car.

"They make popular birthday and anniversary presents," say Good Directions, "especially as we can cover them in gold leaf for golden weddings. One lady asked if we could make an aeroplane weather vane for her husband's birthday - he was a jumbo jet pilot. We didn't have a jumbo but we did make her a biplane, and he rang later to say how delighted he was.

The most common mistake made by customers is trying to

cram too many personal references on the plaque. Dogs, flowers, fruit and people all tend to get tangled in the confusion. "Keep it simple," she advises.

"Most people like flowers. 70 per cent of our sales are for those. Americans love them, especially the foxgloves. One of the biggest sellers is the grey squirrel; it drives the artists crazy having to paint so many. We also have to do a lot of robins and blue tits."

Unsurprisingly, in pet-mad Britain, cats and dogs come high on the must-have list. "We do 50 dogs in the range," she says, "but people complain that although it's the right breed, it doesn't look exactly like their dog. My biggest nightmare would be to have a stand at Crufts."

Signs of the Times in Bedfordshire says that foxes, owls, kingfishers and cornfields feature strongly among requests, although they also make one-off designs. One customer - plainly an Aussie far from home - commissioned a house sign of a wombat welding a cricket bat. Prices range from £25, depending on size and artwork.

Village Green Signs, 0181-568 1831. Good Directions, 01489 577828. Signs of the Times, 01525 874185.



Vane glorious: pigs are pipping cockerels as rooftop furniture

PHOTOGRAPH: GOOD DIRECTIONS

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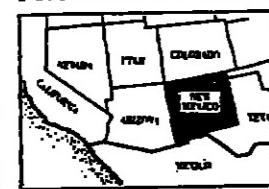
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Do any of you have your money invested in an index-tracking fund? The chances are you do not. Most private investors still have the great bulk of their savings in unit investment trusts run by so-called active fund managers — those trying to do better than the stock market averages.

Yet it is a racing certainty that this is soon going to change. The growth in so-called passively managed funds has been a notable feature of the past five years, but the bandwagon still has a long way to run, not just for private investors (for whom the technique is particularly well suited) but for institutional investors as well.

This is what Warren Buffett, the great American investor, has to say on this subject: "Most investors, both institutional and individual, will find that the best way to own common stocks is through an index fund that charges minimal fees."

Those following this path are sure to beat the net results (after fees and expenses) delivered by

the great majority of investment professionals."

His point is not just that it is notoriously difficult to do better than the market as a whole, year in year out, but that even those investors who are clever enough to find a handful of fund managers who can outperform the index on a consistent basis are likely to find the benefits eroded by high fees and transaction costs.

This is the reason why, on average, four out of five actively managed funds fail to provide their investors with a return that exceeds the return on the market as a whole. Mr Buffett reckons that in the United States, where competition among mutual funds is greater than in this country, the average cost penalty associated with having an actively managed fund is about 1 per cent a year.

This logic is compelling, given that most private investors don't have the time or the skill to pick either the best managers or the best stocks by themselves. (For those who do have the time and the skill it is a different matter.)

Index-tracking funds are cheaper than actively managed funds by quite a margin, and costs are falling. The emergence of an active futures market in the main stock market indices means it has become possible to construct an index-tracking fund more cheaply and more simply than before.

The argument for index-tracking funds has been given an important boost by the recent Office of Fair Trading report into the provision of private pensions in this country. The OFT argues, sensibly in my view, that the best way most ordinary people can provide themselves with a

Index-tracking funds can provide ordinary people with a reasonable pension

reasonable pension is to invest in an index-tracking fund. This should be predominantly invested in equities but, the OFT suggests, it makes sense for the percentage of equities in this kind of fund to be reduced over time, so that the risk of the pension's final value being damaged by a sudden market fall as retirement approaches is reduced.

This seems an eminently sensible proposal, to which it is hard to find valid counter-arguments. One of the main drawbacks is that, aside from Virgin Direct, few such pension products are currently available.

As we know from the pensions mis-selling scandal, the pensions that private sector providers have sold have, in many cases, been inappropriate products sold at a ridiculously expensive price.

It's hard not to agree with Paul Klumpes of the University of Lancaster, one of the contributors to the OFT report, that the commercial incentive for the rest of the industry to make it available is simply not there.

Such a commodity product is not something that is ever going to make huge profits for the provider, although any firm which can grab a reasonable chunk of the market would still have a nice business on its hands. Nor is there much incentive for independent financial advisers to recommend index-tracking funds, when there are bigger commissions to be earned on actively managed funds.

As a general rule, I am no fan of regulated solutions to problems of this kind, but it seems to me that there is a clear case, as Mr Klumpes suggests, for using the regulatory system to encourage

the provision of a "plain vanilla" low-cost index-tracking pension fund product. We all have a vested interest in the country having a well-funded and appropriate level of pension fund provision in place. The cost of providing one through the state is very high, and there is an argument for clearing away any impediments to the introduction of a sensible privately funded system.

One of those impediments, as Mr Klumpes says, is the information barrier. Most people do not know where to go to look for information about an appropriate private pension, and lack the skills to interpret the information even if they could find it. Although there are private sector services which analyse and rate the performance of different fund managers and their products, this information is not widely or cheaply available.

At the same time, there is no uniform set of disclosure rules imposed on the fund management companies. This is one reason why they all seem able to produce figures which

show their performance in a flattering light.

An index-tracking fund with a relatively high equity content is an appropriate investment for someone seeking to provide for their pension. The Law of Unintended Consequences being what it is, it is quite likely that if such products are introduced in this country, they will be introduced at exactly the moment when the stock market takes a dive. If inflation persists, a higher gilt component may be appropriate. But even that is a difficulty which should not obscure the fundamental truth.

There are many good reasons for choosing an active fund manager, and some reason to believe that you can achieve superior performance that way, but for pensions there is no need to chase that extra margin when there is a cheaper and more reliable alternative available. Take it from Mr Buffet (who does know how to achieve superior investment returns), even if you won't take it from me or the OFT.

Glittering image turns dull

Once they were a status symbol. Now everyone is issuing gold credit cards, writes Nic Cicutti

Everyone's going for gold

	CARD	Fee Pa	INTEREST RATES	Existing Debit Transfer
			pm % (purchases)	APR (cash)
American Express	Gold credit	£40	1.24%	15.9%
Au	Gold McCard	N/A	1.0945%	13.90%
Barclays Bank	Gold Visa	£30	1.252%	20.90%
Co-operative Bank	Gold Visa	N/A	1.65%	21.70%
Lloyds Bank	Gold McCard	£120	0.55%	13.90%
Midland Bank	Gold Visa	£35	1.10%	15.30%
Nationwide BS	Gold Visa	£8	1.31%	17.20%
Popular Bank	Gold Visa	£30	1.10%	15.20%
Royal Bank of Scotland	Gold Visa	£35	1.30%	17.90%
Sainsbury's Bank	Gold Visa	£25	1.20%	16.50%

You have just had dinner with the person of your dreams. Coffees were served an hour ago, the bill has just arrived and it is time to leave. You reach for your chequebook only for your partner to place a restraining hand on your arm. "Allow me," she murmurs, slipping her gold credit card deftly on the waiter's tray.

Sounds familiar? It should: the number of gold cards has rocketed in the past four years, up from fewer than 300,000 in 1993 to more than 2.5 million last year. Gold cards are the fastest-growing sector of the market, with average annual growth of 45 per cent a year. By contrast, the growth rate of standard credit cards is relatively small, just 7 per cent.

William Elderkin, an analyst at Datamonitor, a research consultancy which reported this week on the gold card phenomenon, explains: "Competitive pressure in the standard credit card market is more intense than ever. Many bank issuers have lost share as their traditional dominance has been challenged by a variety of new entrants."

Mr Elderkin points out that the share of traditional issues fell from more than 90 per cent in 1990 to about 75 per cent last year.

Many issuers are turning to the less competitive gold card market, whose holders spent an average of £2,369 last year, compared to £1,334 for a standard card.

The result has been an explosion of new cards, with 24 issuers compared to just four a few years ago.

This week, American Express announced the fray with a gold credit card not charging 15.9 per cent APR. To sweeten its offer still further, Amex is offering a rate of 12.6 per cent APR for the first six months.

By combining the introductory rate with the higher one applicable after six months, Amex says users could save £220 in interest payments the first year compared to the Barclays Gold Visa card.

Savings of £72.80 are achievable even on Midland's Gold Visa card which is, however, cheaper in year two and thereafter. In addition, the card issuer claims its service to customers, including higher purchase protection cover and 24-hour emergency card replacement, can beat the opposition hands down.

Debra Davis, vice president at American Express, says: "Our research shows that gold card users expect a 24-carat service and are not satisfied with paler imitations."

Despite the typical £20,000 minimum earnings limit — unchanged for years — most applicants for gold cards are above that limit. A spokeswoman for the Au card, marketed by Royal Bank of Scotland, says the majority of its clients earn in excess of £29,000 and their current monthly

card spend is £400. National Westminster Bank users' average income is £30,000.

Card users give a variety of reasons for going gold, including status. Ray, who did not wish his full name to be used, says: "I have had an Amex gold charge card since 1979. I was initially attracted to the green card because it had no spending limit, which was handy for foreign travel."

"The gold card was appealing because it offered a £10,000 overdraft at 1 per cent above base rate. Lloyds Bank have considerably eroded that since. And yes, there was an element of status about it, especially when my improvident boss was refused one."

"The overdraft is handy if you're trying to stave off privatisation issues, but that era is over. I prefer to use a Visa which gives Oxfam a bit of money."

Sheila, another user, says: "I got my Co-op Visa gold card because of its principled position, and because it is free for life. As I pay my bill every month the interest rate is irrelevant."

Until recently, the main attraction of gold credit cards was the lower interest payable than their standard counterparts. For example, Barclays' Gold Visa card charges 20.9 per cent APR on purchases, compared to 22.9 per cent APR with Barclaycard.

Many other gold competitors are significantly cheaper, including Lloyd's Bank and Nationwide, both charging 17.2 per cent APR on purchases. Sainsbury's charges just 16.5 per cent.

However, the difference between standard and gold cards has been eroded by the entry into the market of a new breed of low-cost competi-

tors, including Peoples' Bank of Connecticut, charging 14.4 per cent APR on purchases.

As well as the Au card, named after the chemical symbol for gold, Royal Bank of Scotland customers have the option of two other gold cards, including the RBS Gold Visa, which charges 17.9 per cent APR.

An RBS spokeswoman says the differences between them are to do with the fact that Au is designed to appeal to people who do not already have an account with the bank.

In practice it is hard to see why one should go for gold when less precious metals will do just as well. Unless you are a highly rated status. In which case, truly discerning customers may have to look beyond gold and to platinum, titanium or similar metal exotics for the extra kudos.

The bank based this claim on the assumption that each of these 16 million accounts would have a monthly current account balance of £750, on which Abbey National customers might receive £8.37 a year after tax while the others get nothing.

More shoddy research comes from Abbey National. Its survey claimed this week that 16 million non-interest paying current accounts may be losing their users more than £130m a year.

The bank based this claim on the assumption that each of these 16 million accounts would have a monthly current account balance of £750, on which Abbey National customers might receive £8.37 a year after tax while the others get nothing.

Abbey's survey is flawed.

First, the bank admits there are 61 million current accounts in the UK. Many of them must be dormant, with little or nothing in them. The chances are the most likely account to be dormant is the one that pays no interest.

As it happens, I know what I am talking about, for a change, because I have a dormant account — with

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EARLIER this year we carried out a free financial makeover on Paula Charlton, a graphic artist. Her financial adviser, Roddy Kohn, diagnosed problems with several pensions she had been wrongly sold instead of being advised to join her company pension scheme.

The providers involved were informed about this.

This week, Paula heard she will receive compensation worth more than £23,000, thanks to *The Independent*.

We can't promise such astonishing results every time. But if you want to be considered for a financial health check, write to: Nic Cicutti, Free Financial Makeover, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. You must be prepared for your name and picture to appear in the paper. It could be you.

Make it your mid-summer resolution to talk to a good adviser about all your investments. Be wary of unnecessary recycling. But if a fund has been a dud performer for years and shows no sign of improving, switch to something else.

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HSBC	0800 000 0000	1 year	£1,000			
Leisure Credit	0800 000 0000	1 year	£1,000			
NatWest	0800 000 0000	1 year	£1,000			
Prudential	0800 000 0000	1 year	£1,000			
Standard Chartered	0800 000 0000	1 year	£1,000			
TELEHOME	0800 000 0000	1 year	£1,000			
First Time Buyers Fixed Rates	0800 000 0000	1 year	£1,000			
HSBC	0800 000 0000	1 year	£1,000			
Prudential	0800 000 0000	1 year	£1,000			
TELEHOME	0800 000 0000	1 year	£1,000			
FIRST TIME BUYERS VARIABLE RATES						
Barclays Bank	0800 000 0000	1 year	£1,000			
Chase Manhattan	0800 000 0000	1 year	£1,000			
First Direct	0800 000 0000	1 year	£1,000			
HSBC	0800 000 0000	1 year	£1,000			
Leisure Credit	0800 000 0000	1 year	£1,000			
NatWest	0800 000 0000	1 year	£1,000			
Prudential	0800 000 0000	1 year	£1,000			
TELEHOME	0800 000 0000	1 year	£1,000			
SECOND CHARGE						
Barclays Bank	0800 000 0000	Max LTV Adv	Term			
HSBC	0800 000 0000	Max LTV Adv	Term			
Prudential	0800 000 0000	Max LTV Adv	Term			
TELEHOME	0800 000 0000	Max LTV Adv	Term			
PERSONAL LOANS						
Barclays Bank	0800 000 0000	Up to 10 years				
HSBC	0800 000 0000	Up to 10 years				
Prudential	0800 000 0000	Up to 10 years				
TELEHOME	0800 000 0000	Up to 10 years				
TELEPHONE						
Barclays Bank	0800 000 0000	Authorised				
HSBC	0800 000 0000	Authorised				
Prudential	0800 000 0000	Authorised				
TELEHOME	0800 000 0000	Authorised				
CREDIT CARDS						
Barclays Bank	0800 000 0000	£1,000	2.5%			
HSBC	0800 000 0000	£1,000	2.5%			
Prudential	0800 000 0000	£1,000	2.5%			
TELEHOME	0800 000 0000	£1,000	2.5%			
STANDARD						
Barclays Bank	0800 000 0000	£1,000	2.5%			
HSBC	0800 000 0000	£1,000	2.5%			
Prudential	0800 000 0000	£1,000	2.5%			
TELEHOME	0800 000 0000	£1,000	2.5%			
MINIMUM AGE						
Barclays Bank	0800 000 0000	22 yrs				
HSBC	0800 000 0000	22 yrs				
Prudential	0800 000 0000	22 yrs				
TELEHOME	0800 000 0000	22 yrs				
A - Minimum age 22 yrs. Holders of comprehensive motor insurance policy or holder's existing customers						
APR - Assured percentage rate						
ASB - Accepted, savings and unemployment insurance						
B+C - Buildings and contents insurance						
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E - Standard rate						
F - Mortgage exclusively						
G - Introductory rate for a limited period						
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All rates subject to change without notice. Source: MONEYFACTS 01692 500677 21 August 1997						

Coming to a screen near you

Rachel Fixsen goes for a wander through cyberspace

Swindles, child porn and mass murder games are not the only offerings to grace the Internet. If you want to get clued up about how best to manage your money, the expanding computer network is a good place to start.

Many people go blank at the very mention of the Internet, especially those who haven't even got to grips with computers yet. But more and more people have become switched on to the possibilities available to them on the Internet.

Moneypedia, an Internet magazine, says most of its users are males between 25 and 44. This web service has been running for two and a half years, and has between 60,000 and 65,000 regular users. Lin Wong, a **Moneypedia** spokeswoman, says: "People can sit in their office or at home and get all the information they want, without having to go to the library."

"A lot of people use the web for browsing and research and it's only once they've found what they're looking for that they actually pick up the phone and buy."

Having no computer or modem needn't stop you browsing the web. It is cheap to use a computer at an internet cafe, where staff are around to help you. Once you're up and surfing, use one of the many search engines which are offered to see what is around.

To get a quote for almost any type of insurance, try going directly to an insurance company's home page and then access the option you want. For example, on Direct Line's website you can fill in a user-friendly form. The firm says it aims to e-mail you an estimate within 12 working hours.

For a list of UK insurers and their website addresses, try Business Money's index of UK insurance companies.

If you're looking for foreign exchange rates, financial services provider Bloomberg has a page of key currency rates which, though not real-time, are updated frequently.

Moneypedia lists its advertisers and their home pages which can easily be accessed from

this menu. The fund management groups give up-to-date buying and selling prices for their unit trusts.

For a broader overview of performance figures for unit trusts, investment trusts, other funds and savings account rates, try HSW Powersearch from **Moneypedia**. Alternatively, visit the website of fund performance analysis firm Micropal.

Or try the Moneyweb site of former independent financial adviser Ian Dickson. The latest stories are on pyramid scams, why you should make a will, and there is one on how to interpret investment fund performance statistics.

For a more comprehensive guide to personal finance, look at the AAA Investment Guide's site. This claims to be equivalent to around 200 pages of print.

If you need real-time stock market quotes, you usually have to pay for them. Try Electronic Share Information's ESI personal finance website. You have to register to use the services, and only some of them are then free. For financial news you can access Reuters news items through search engine Infoseek.

Alliance & Leicester has an online calculator which you can use to work out different levels of mortgage repayment, while Nationwide has an interest calculator to show you how big a return you might get from its accounts.

Getting information from the Internet is one thing, but buying financial services in cyberspace is an altogether more hazardous activity.

The advent of a new specification called SET, Secure Electronic Transaction, developed by Mastercard and Visa, should be introduced next year to increase security for online payment card transactions.

Before you think about buying anything, take a look at the Securities and Investment Board's website. The SIB is the UK's main financial regulator. "If an investment opportunity sounds too good to be true, it normally is too good to be true, be safe and/or legal," it says. Sound advice.



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TO FIND OUT WHAT'S ON TV, WHERE TO GO AND WHEN, READ THE EYE TODAY

inside back

25

So Dodi's daddy's desire to do Di a favour has made Kelly crumble. Call me hard-hearted, but every time I catch a glimpse of Drippy snivelling because she's been dithered of her diamond supply - it's dead as a dodo, in fact - I just have warm little fantasies about Dodi and Dum dum waltzing round dear David and the Duchess's Parisian palace to musical classics like Captain Pigeon's "Mouldy Old Dough" or Whiney Houston's "N' Di Will Always Love You" and playing the time-honoured French game of *touche-didi*. The only thing that would make the whole thing more priceless would be if he ploughed some of the upcoming contents sale into buying some Arp sculptures and some daubs by Duchamp. Then Di and Dodi could do it among the Dadas.

What I had never realised until this week was the fact that Fayed minor and I have so much in common. Obviously, the casual outsider might think we were siblings, what with the fleet of yachts, the twin department stores and the execrable taste in interior furnishings, but I have, in fact, always been rather overawed by the man's searing intellectualism, that capacity to combine sportiness with an intensity of work ethic that I can only dream of. But the Sunday papers brought news that we are, in fact, linked by more than I believed.

"DODI!" screamed the headline on the shelf in my corner shop, "DOUBLE DID IT". It seems poor Dodi has been plagued by a *doppelganger*, who, while the real man lives the modest life of an aesthete, has been living the high life in his name, hanging out in restaurants, staying in hotels, scattering jewellery about, getting engaged at the drop of a hat, buzzing from tatty to tatty in his little rubber dinghy. Dodi has been fortunate: his double has been arrested and put out of harm's way, while mine is still very much on the

loose. Whoever she is - and I swear I'm going to catch up with her - she is heaping shame on my head and that of my family. Why, only last week, she paid the phone bill, and in July she was seen putting her hand in her pocket in a bar. And it really made my stomach churn when my best friend - my best friend, mind - accused me of being seen on the bus.

This is giving me sleepless nights. I don't mind telling you, I haven't invested all this energy in propping up the bar car, having my picture taken leaning over weathergirls and making the most of my season ticket to the Battersea henpeck to have some killer bimbo

Serena Mackesy
In my week

Dodi has been fortunate: his double has been arrested and put out of harm's way, while mine is still very much on the loose

come along and do her own washing. My father is beside himself. He's been on the phone threatening to cut me off if I don't get serious. "You don't think," he said, "I made all those sacrifices in your childhood to hear that you've been seen spending your evenings at National Film Theatre triple-bills, do you? You're a disgrace to the family." I heard him chew his cigar down the line and I knew I was in trouble. "But father," I pleaded, "You know I was comforting a divorcee on a jetski at St Tropez last Thursday week. I can't have been being turned away from Harrods for carrying a backpack at the same time, can I?"

"Dog, dog, daughter of dog," he said in his rough-hewn but loving vernacular, "I will take no more of this. Get-

photographed with George Hamilton by the end of the week, or it's curtains for the eighth yacht."

Of course, a double has its advantages. The presence of mine has got me out of a few hairy scrapes in the past, like the time I was caught red-handed buying baked beans in Tesco, or the awful, awful day that the press caught on to the fact that I had once had a liaison with someone whose looks had not been surgically enhanced. I simply phoned Taki and told him the sorry tale. He gave me top billing. "My dear friend Serena 'Serri' Mackesy," he wrote, "as is beautiful and cultured as she is wealthy, has been dogged by late rumours from less knowledgeable social diarists. The ageless socialite, with whom I had a long chat at my dear friend Jonathan Aitken's delightful cheese-and-wine buffet on Thursday, told me, between exchanging kisses with the ever-charming Wefic Said and dear friend Elton John..." and bingo, I was off the hook.

Which is why I worry for poor Dodi. Now that his double is in jail, he's going to have to come up with some other excuses when inexplicable stirs surface. It's tricky, because one has to have something that is believable, which is why I've decided to share some excuses which have worked beautifully for me in the past. "It wasn't me. Small grey aliens had beamed me into their spaceship and planted a robot replacement while they performed fiendish experiments of a sexual nature on my paralysed body." "Mossad did it." "Don't be silly. If it had been me I'd have paid with a brown paper envelope." "I was in the Paris Ritz at the time. You can check with the hotel records."

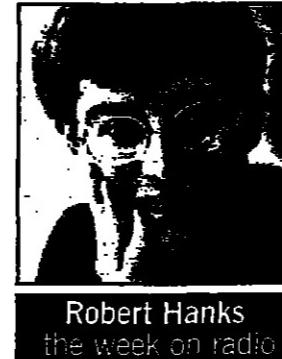
Failing that, he could always spring the double, spirit him away in a Gulf Stream jet and plant him on the Joukai to pose for photos while he slips off to indulge his secret vice of sitting on a hard-backed chair while reading Proust.

One thing you may have noticed about all the programmes beamed at us to mark Indian independence is that they have concentrated almost exclusively on India and Pakistan and what Empire and its aftermath have meant to them. There has been almost no mention of what it has meant to Britain - some programmes on the immigrant experience, but nothing that I've heard on the effects for the rest of the population.

Perhaps the omission has been deliberate - this was the sub-continent's party, after all, and it's not as if post-imperial navel-gazing is utterly unheard of at the BBC. But that is partly the problem: in this country, the end of Empire is discussed almost entirely in terms of loss - declining self-esteem, declining economic power, declining political clout. Coupled with that, underneath all the good intentions in the BBC's *Midnight's Legacy* series, there is a current of liberal paternalism: an assumption that Empire is an evil we did to them.

There's little recognition of the effects of Empire on us.

Imperial short measures

Robert Hanks
the week on radio

returned after a long holiday (Saga, at a guess). Knowledge is power. When people say that, what they usually mean is that it bestows power, but you could also take it as a rough equation - the things we know about and the things that we have power over tend to coincide, and causation works in both directions.

It's been argued, for example, that zoology is a quintessentially imperial subject - in the 19th century it reached its finest flowering in the two largest imperial powers, Britain and Russia, because knowing your way around the fauna of a territory was a way of confirming your claim to it. If you accept that, it's easy to see how, when three-quarters of the map was coloured pink, it must have seemed natural for the patriotic Briton to take all knowledge as his/her province. Hence the cult of general knowledge, of which *RBQ* is one of the odder results.

The programme has been toned down in significant ways. As an instance of this, take the one legacy of Empire that we don't seem to be able to get rid of: *Ronald Britain Quiz* (Radio 4, Mon), recently

Lessons in Narcissism

Jasper Rees
the week on television

Those party animals at the BBC seem to have judged that, after spending the weekend with Elvis, we'd probably want some more pelvic-floor exercise to get us through the week. Hence *Classic Albums* (BBC1, Mon) on The Band, a sound introduction to *The Artist Formerly Known as Captain Beefheart* (BBC2, Tues) and *Oasis - Right Here, Right Now* (BBC1, Wed).

With so many of them about, you could easily get hooked on the rockprog (not to be confused with progrock, an altogether more dangerous drug that turns users into social lepers). But the *Oasis* film was well placed at the end of the sequence to steer you away from the threat of addiction.

It may well be that in 30 years' time someone will make a rather better film for *Classic Albums About Be Here Now* (how about *Oasis - Right There, Right Then?*). But if so, one of the problems the future film will have to surmount - apart from the holes the Gallaghers will inevitably have burnt into their own memories - will be that the archive footage is going to have to come from this hopelessly crooked hagiography.

It's not only rock stars who use the proximity of video cameras as an essential aid to self-promotion. Take *Party Monster* (C4, Mon), a film about New York's self-styled "club kids". These pallid impersonations of humanity were in the habit of making home videos of their every amoral activity. Picture the scene. "I'm doing cold turkey." "Way to go? Let's film it!"

The programme about them fell gratefully on the fruits of their Narcissian addiction to illustrate the repetitive tale of Michael Avig, a party promoter who murdered a flatmate called Angel and dumped the corpse in the East River.

You'd guess that cohabitantes called Michael and Angel would be almost symbiotically close, but that seems to have been the problem. Some months before his arrest, Avig told his home-

movie camera that he killed Angel, who had modelled his own urine in free cans, compliments of the house. Cheers.

One of Avig's coterie, known as James St James, should have been called Stephen St Stephen, because he was always chained up in a loincloth and getting stoned. He is now in Hollywood, writing a book - *The Gospel According to St James*, perhaps. Like everyone else in the film, he sounded as if he had sinusitis, and there's only one way you can do that without actually getting sinusitis.

Dick Emery: A Life on the Box (BBC1, Wed) was one of those attempts to lift the bonnet on a dead comedian and work out what made his engine purr. Most of the probing, as it is on these occasions, was done by white-haired old pros called Barry. Analysis was almost as scarce as in the *Oasis* film, although, reading the invisible small print between the lines, you suspect that Emery was not liked.

"Privately insecure, publicly aggressive," said one Barry in code. Unscrambled, that says, "I hated him".

Depressingly, they'll give the same treatment to Harry Enfield et al one distant August, because today's popular culture is the day after tomorrow's lazy schedule-filling stroll round the archives dressed up as a PhD.

DAMIEN HURTS....and his painfully creative struggle



Whatever happened to...

Old Age

Age Rage
At 117 years old, Marie-Louis Febrerie was this week named as the oldest person in the world. But it seems old age isn't for everyone. "Never trust anyone over 30," they used to say back in the Sixties, and Lord Tebbit complained recently of a "cult of ageism" in Britain, (casting his green eyes over Hague and Blair no doubt). He is supported by the Deputy Governor of the Bank of England's warning that ageism "is a

big-scale economic problem".

Forever Young
According to *Tatler*, simply take a credit card, an irresponsible attitude, and a responsible bank balance, and a woman can bypass middle age. In our culture, Peter Pan fantasies abound: this week alone saw the Rolling Stones making a concerted effort to fend off retirement with another tour, a 15-year-old's pregnancy by an 11-year-old, and a 10-

year-old competing against adults in a chess competition. Even the Queen mucks about on the Internet for the cameras. When the Society Against Ageism replaces their chairman because he is too old, it is enough to make you wonder how long this can go on.

Facts of Life
This country does not recognise age as part of the Equal Opportunities legislation. Perhaps that's why *Tatler*

feels the need to suggest, "there's HRT, IVF and moisturiser; there's roller-blading, Pilates and zip-and-tuck". But, to inject some realism, by 2000 every third person in the job market will be over 40, and by 2034 the number of people over the current state retirement age will increase by more than half. The Government has responded to these statistics by introducing plans to equalise state retirement for men and women at 65, so that the

workers-to-dependents ratio is not so disastrously unbalanced.

Age Before...
The Employers Forum on Age (EFA) now enjoys the support of more than 70 high-street stores, who between them employ 1.3 million people. Their attitude towards growing old is more positive: older workers tend to be loyal. This means lower absenteeism, and their presence can enhance a company's reputation. Now there is

a Bill going through Parliament making it illegal for job advertisements to mention age restrictions.

A spokesperson for Age Concern says: "Old age is seen as an illness by our youth-obsessed society, yet older people make an invaluable contribution to all aspects of society. Many will testify that their later years are the most fulfilling of their life. One thing is certain: everybody gets old."

Jennifer Rodger

WEATHER



The British Isles

General Summary and Outlook

England and Wales will have a cloudy day with any brightness confined to the south-east and East Anglia. Outbreaks of rain are expected in northern and western areas this morning, but this afternoon any remaining rain will become confined to the hills. Southern Scotland and Northern Ireland will also have some rain this morning, but it should be drier by afternoon. Meanwhile, northern Scotland may have the odd shower but there will be a good deal of dry weather, and the far north will see some sunny spells.

Tomorrow, southern and eastern Scotland will start cloudy with a little rain in places, but brighter weather already across north-west Scotland and Northern Ireland will extend to most places during the day with some sunny spells expected as well.

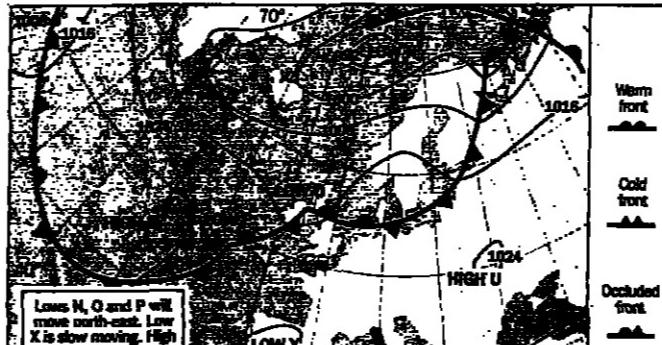
England and Wales will start cloudy with light rain here and there, however, all but East Anglia and the south-east should brighten up with some sunshine developing.

Lighting up Times

	London	Edinburgh	Belfast	Glasgow	Newcastle	Cardiff
8.00pm to 6.00am	8.04pm to 6.02am	8.15pm to 6.10am	8.15pm to 6.05am	8.15pm to 6.05am	8.21pm to 6.00am	8.21pm to 6.05am
8.15pm to 6.04am	8.14pm to 6.12am	8.15pm to 6.07am	8.15pm to 6.06am	8.15pm to 6.06am	8.15pm to 6.06am	8.15pm to 6.06am
8.30pm to 6.16am	8.35pm to 6.18am					
8.45pm to 6.16am	8.45pm to 6.18am					

	London	Edinburgh	Belfast	Glasgow	Newcastle	Cardiff
8.00pm to 6.04am	8.04pm to 6.02am	8.14pm to 6.12am	8.15pm to 6.07am	8.15pm to 6.06am	8.21pm to 6.06am	8.21pm to 6.06am
8.15pm to 6.05am	8.14pm to 6.13am	8.15pm to 6.08am	8.15pm to 6.07am	8.15pm to 6.07am	8.31pm to 6.18am	8.35pm to 6.18am
8.30pm to 6.16am	8.35pm to 6.18am					
8.45pm to 6.16am	8.45pm to 6.18am					

Europe and The World



WORLD WEATHER YESTERDAY, MIDDAY (GMT), today, this evening, tommorrow

London, 21°C
Paris, 20°C
Berlin, 20°C
Rome, 21°C
Madrid, 21°C
Barcelona, 21°C
Athens, 21°C
Istanbul, 21°C
Kiev, 21°C
Tashkent, 21°C
Beijing, 21°C
Tokyo, 21°C
Seoul, 21°C
Hanoi, 21°C
Bangkok, 21°C
Phnom Penh, 21°C
Colombo, 21°C
Kuala Lumpur, 21°C
Singapore, 21°C
Doha, 21°C
Abu Dhabi, 21°C
Muscat, 21°C
Riyadh, 21°C
Dammam, 21°C
Bahrain, 21°C
Doha, 21°C
Kuwait, 21°C
Amman, 21°C
Jerusalem, 21°C
Tel Aviv, 21°C
Beirut, 21°C
Cairo, 21°C
Casablanca, 21°C
Tunis, 21°C
Algiers, 21°C
Tripoli, 21°C
Khartoum, 21°C
Juba, 21°C
Addis Ababa, 21°C
Nairobi, 21°C
Dar es Salaam, 21°C
Port Louis, 21°C
Mombasa, 21°C
Accra, 21°C
Lagos, 21°C
Abuja, 21°C
Kano, 21°C
Khartoum, 21°C
Asmara, 21°C
Aden, 21°C
Sana'a, 21°C
Riyadh, 21°C
Dammam, 21°C
Kuwait, 21°C
Doha, 21°C
Muscat, 21°C
Abu Dhabi, 21°C
Doha, 21°C
Kuwait, 21°C
Dammam, 21°C
Kuwait, 21°C

TODAY'S TELEVISION

A popular game in the Seventies was turning down the brilliance on the telly during *Top of the Pops* and watching the shiny white teeth of the Osmonds dance like butterflies emerging from a cave. *Osmond Family Values* (Sun BBC1) is a veritable toothfest: milk teeth, missing teeth, and, above all, pre-orthodontic teeth that Sunk America.

This is a remarkable film in that it takes a subject of unlimited tackiness - Elvis-style spangle suits, small boys in bowties sitting on Andy Williams's knee, Marie pushing her own-brand costume dolls on QVC - and treats it with seriousness. And the family respond avidly, spouting insights into their evolution: "We saw the Beatles and we thought, 'we goggad be who we are'"; their talents: "The Donny and Marie Show was really cutting edge", and their barking mad religious views: their 1974 album *The Plan*, apparently, predicted that the Mormons'

millennial End Time would coincide with current trends, as well as useless but cherifiable facts - *Crazy Horses*, for instance, was banned in Africa because it was thought to be drug-related. Watch it and practise those smiles.

Summer Dance (Sat BBC2) is a bit of a treat, as well: the Paris Opera Ballet performing Rudolf Nureyev's choreography of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. This is a lush take on the double suicide which could wing swallows from the most dedicated post-modernist, in rich sets by Ezio Frigerio. Manuel Legris and Monique Loufoures are the unfortunate pair. Lionel Delanoe is Mercutio and Charles Jude is Tybalt.

Still on the romantic tip, Sunday night's *Prom 97* (BBC2) promises to be a corker. Conductor Andrew Litton and sexy young violinist Joshua Bell lead the Dallas Symphony Orchestra in a programme of Roy Harris's *Symphony No 3*, Samuel

Barber's *Violin Concerto* and Tchaikovsky's *Fifth Symphony*. Slushy enough to end the weekend on a high note.

Archaeology, though an exciting discipline, isn't one that springs to mind as making great television. A lot of it, after all, involves aeons spent knee-deep in dust, brushing bits of broken crockery. The achievement of *Time Team* (Sat, Sun, Mon C4) in managing to win awards, therefore, is all the more impressive. This weekend brings a five-episode in which Mick Aston, reader in archaeology at Bristol University, and Tony Robinson, presenter extraordinaire, join an excavation at a secret site somewhere in Britain. This might well turn out to be a weekend-long advertisement for the virtues of the editing suite, but full marks for trying to sex up the subject.

The BBC's latest prime-time drama offering is *The Beggar Bride* (Sun BBC1), adapted from Gillian White's novel and

starring Joe Duttine, Nicholas Jones and Keeley Hawes. This is a twist on the *Pygmalion* plot, in which Hawes hatches a plan to get out of her nasty council estate by marrying an industrialist and landing a fat divorce settlement. All amusing enough, though there is a nagging irritation about the premise that a girl who can transform herself into toffs' toby can't transform herself into someone with a job.

Finally, *Equinox: Secrets of the Psychics* (Sun C4) casts an evil eye over the world of psychic phenomena and the controversy that has raged for the past 150 years between believers and virgins as to whether they actually exist. The programme includes amusing set-ups of séances and the like, but the most interesting fact that emerges is that, when scientists allowed themselves to be duped, it fell to the conjurers to carry on the campaign to debunk the tricksters.

BBC 1

7.00 Children's BBC: Harry and the Hendersons. 7.25 News, Weather. 7.30 Babes. 7.55 Albert the 5th Musketeer. 8.20 The Flintstones. 8.45 Marvel Action Hour. 9.45 Grange Hill. 10.10 Sweet Valley High. 10.35 The O Zone. 10.42 Weather.

10.45 Grandstand: 10.50 Cricket - Sixth Test, England v Australia (7.30/96033). 1.05 News (5.10/25830). 1.10 Football Focus (10/30507). 1.40 Cricket - Sixth Test, England v Australia (4716236). 2.40 Racing from Goodwood: 2.45 Coronation Stakes (1217878). 2.55 Cricket - Sixth Test, England v Australia (3780149). 3.10 Racing from Goodwood: 3.15 Ladbrokes Racing Sprint Handicap (4626497). 3.25 Cricket - Sixth Test, England v Australia (621946). 3.40 Racing from Goodwood: 3.50 Tripleprint Celebration Mile (670385). 4.00 Cricket - Sixth Test, England v Australia (7692526). 4.40 Final Score (1515387).

5.20 News, Weather (7) (9456594).

5.35 Local News, Weather (8/248439).

5.35 Dad's Army (R) (7/28149).

6.05 The Edinburgh Military Tattoo. Over 1,000 performers take part in the 49th Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

Featuring steel drums from Trinidad and Tobago, swirling dances from the Khyber Pass, Gurkhas from Nepal and the largest contingent of pipes and drums ever in Edinburgh Castle (S) (9667743).

7.10 Confessions (S) (7/305830).

7.50 The National Lottery Live (S) (7/460120).

8.10 Bugs. A bugler in the secret services (S) (994435).

9.00 Hunt for Justice (Dick Lowry 1995 US). Real-life detective thriller with Nicholas Turturro as a New Jersey state trooper seeking revenge for the murder of a friend. This rather lame plot-thriller is enlivened when he finds that the suspects are terrorists and teams up with an agent (Adam Arkin) to pursue them. Not bad at all (S) (7/4304).

10.30 News and Sport, Weather (7) (537168).

10.50 Match of the Day. Highlights of top matches in the FA Carling Premiership (S) (7/4429385).

12.00 Top of the Pops (R) (7/9926).

12.30 **ITV** Running Cool (Ferd and Beverly Sebastian 1993 US). Biker glory story featuring characters called Ironbutt and Bone, which sums up the class of the production, fairly neatly (S) (309453).

2.15 Weather (1191521). To 2.15am.

REGIONS. NI: 4.40 Final Score.

5.00 - 5.20 Northern Ireland Results.

5.30 - 5.35 Newsline. Scots 7.00-7.25 Pages from Ceefax. 4.40 - 5.20 Sportscene. 5.30 - 5.35 Reporting Scotland. 10.50 - 12.00 Sportscene - Match of the Day. Wales: 4.40 Final Score. 4.55 - 5.20 Wales on Saturday. 5.30 - 6.05 Wales on Saturday.

BBC 2

6.20 Open University: Toulouse: Money and Power in Provincial France (4942471). 6.45 Dating a Granite (965781).

7.10 Paris and the New Mathematics (7214316). 7.35 A University without Walls (4113168). 8.00 Open Saturday (119385). 10.30 Brainwaves (7310526).

10.35 The Phil Silvers Show (R) (3396743).

11.00 Hancock's Half Hour (R) (4778).

11.30 Country File (S) (5410).

12.00 Birds with Tony Soper. Birds and where and how to look for them. An essential guide to make teenage recreational pastimes (S) (9602177).

12.20 **ITV** The Paradise Case (Alfred Hitchcock 1947 US). One of the less-frequently shown Hitchcock movies, and not deservedly so. A lawyer (Gregory Peck) defends a woman (Alida Valli) accused of killing her blind husband in order to marry her lover, and ends up falling in love with her. This bog-standard old-did-she-or-not plot is relieved by brilliant acting, particularly from Valli and Charles Laughton, and the director's usual mastery of timing (7302174).

2.10 **ITV** The Purple Plain (Robert Parrish 1954 UK). Gregory Peck, again, in a rare UK production, setting his jaw and going off to take on the Japanese in the war-torn Burmese jungle. Once there, he behaves increasingly strangely, causing big problems for his squadron. But when his plane crashes in Japanese territory, he is forced to put his mental state on hold in order to survive. Second-level psychological war film with script by H E Bates (who also, of course, contributed the excellent "Fair Stood the Wind for France" to the war genre) and Eric Ambler (T) (362781).

3.50 The Saint (R) (3905261).

4.40 Cricket - Sixth Test, England v Australia (34337168).

6.30 News and Sport, Weather (T) (505472).

6.45 Summer Dance. See Preview, above (S) (67420675).

9.15 Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads? (R) (7/80654).

9.45 Our Friends in the North. It's 1979, and the nation is in the grip of disco fever as all four friends find themselves living in Newcastle for the first time in 15 years. But change is on the way - Nicky cuts his hair, stands for Parliament and redeclares his love for Mary. Tosker meets the woman of his dreams; while Georgie deals in drugs. And, of course, Thatcher looms (R) (S) (4154694).

11.00 **ITV** The Great Northfield Minnesota Raid (Philip Kaufman 1972 US). An attempt at portraying the Cole Younger-Jesse James gang in a rather more accurate historical light than usual, which, ultimately, fails to come off because of lack of investment in the screenplay. Starring Cliff Robertson and Robert Duvall, Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid ain't (82033).

12.20 Cricket - Sixth Test. Highlights of England v Australia (S) (7/61892).

1.10 **ITV** Ringo and His Golden Pistol (Sergio Corbucci 1966 IT). Unattractive spaghetti western that at least wins the award for top title of the night. Stars Mark Damon. Dubbed (1650453). To 2.40am.

ITV/LWT

6.00 GMTV. 6.00 News. 6.10 Professor Bubble. 6.30 Barney and Friends. 6.50 Our House. 7.10 Gummy Bears.

Including Craig Young's film and video guide. 7.40 Disney's Wake Up in the Wild. 7.45 Disney's Fun with "Goof Troop" and "Quack Pack", presented by Dave Benson Phillips. 8.00 Big Bad Beesteborgs. And Time Out with Mr Motivator in Amsterdam (7345323).

9.25 Mashed (S) (7192317).

11.05 **ITV** The Chart Show (R) (7759577).

11.45 **ITV** Belgian Grand Prix - Qualifying (S) (960586).

12.20 **ITV** The Paradise Case (Alfred Hitchcock 1947 US). One of the less-frequently shown Hitchcock movies, and not deservedly so. A lawyer (Gregory Peck) defends a woman (Alida Valli) accused of killing her blind husband in order to marry her lover, and ends up falling in love with her. This bog-standard old-did-she-or-not plot is relieved by brilliant acting, particularly from Valli and Charles Laughton, and the director's usual mastery of timing (7302174).

1.15 **ITV** News, Weather (T) (51049410).

1.20 London Weekend Tonight (T) (8095217).

1.25 **ITV** The Golden Four - International Athletics from Brussels. The Ivo Van Damme immortal meeting in Brussels (65633120).

2.25 **ITV** Captain's Table (Jack Lee 1960 UK). Cargo skipper gets luxury liner Comedy (2485120).

3.50 **ITV** The Cosby Mysteries (S) (7) (2829694).

4.35 **ITV** Team Live (S) (2126507).

5.05 Brookside (R) (S) (7029781).

6.35 House Gang (S) (7) (701007).

Channel 4

6.50 Dennis (R) (7233878).

7.10 Sonic the Hedgehog (R) (5638439).

7.40 The Finder (R) (4245491).

8.00 Transworld Sport (21859).

9.00 Morning Line (S) (59846).

10.00 Channel 4 Athletics (S) (65762).

11.00 Mission Impossible (T) (86526).

12.00 Rawhide (36946).

1.00 Time Team Live. See Preview, above (S) (66650762).

1.15 **ITV** Arabian Adventure (Kevin Connor 1979 UK). Flying-carpet swashbuckler with Christopher Lee, Milo O'Shea and Emma Samms (T) (59356217).

3.05 **ITV** The Mark of Zorro (Don McDougall 1974 US). TV-movie version of the series. Frank Langella is the Hispanic-Californian brat who straps on a mask to avenge evil (4865168).

4.20 Travelogues. Toronto, Canada (R) (T) (219649).

4.35 Time Team Live (S) (2126507).

5.05 Brookside (R) (S) (7029781).

6.35 House Gang (S) (7) (701007).

Channel 5

6.00 Dappledown Farm (6029052).

6.30 The Great Garden Game (R) (S) (7) (9540897).

7.00 5 News Early (S) (6078255).

7.30 Hawaikoo: Wimzie's House (6057762).

8.00 Alvin and the Chipmunks (2480033).

8.30 Land of the Lost (2482930).

9.00 Beverly Hills, 90210 (S) (7) (9727262).

9.55 Beverly Hills, 90210 (S) (7) (6161236).

10.50 Mag Unifrom (R) (S) (52650101).

11.00 Turnstyle (S) (28941656).

12.50 5 News (S) (7) (59222878).

1.00 The Mag (S) (1260746).

2.00 USA High (S) (59831878).

2.20 The Mag (Continued) (S) (8030149).

3.15 Sunbeam Omnibus. Michael and Virginia spend their time hunting for an apartment, and Michael promises to always be there for her. In a similar mood, Eddie Rabbitts Rae that he wants her in his life more than anything else (T) (80570781).

6.00 5 News and Sport (S) (7) (7745269).

6.05 Hercules: The Legendary Journeys.

Hercules descends to the netherworld to rescue the daughter of the goddess Demeter, where he is reunited with his deceased wife. Edutainment for flesh-watchers (39813217).

6.55 Xena: Warrior Princess. More of the same, which C5 keep trying to tell us is cult viewing. Hercules and Iolaus join forces with Xena and Gabrielle to free Prometheus, who has been chained by the gods. Oh, those gods (S) (6627526).

7.50 News and Sport (S) (7) (9985526).

8.10 JAG. A gas leak causes a space shuttle mission to be aborted shortly before take-off, and a man is killed as the craft is evacuated. Harm and Meg are called in to find out why (2997743).

9.00 **ITV** Thrill (